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THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE CANNING.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

BY R. THERRY, ESQ.

OF GRAY'S INN, BARRISTER AT LAW.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

"He had ambition to prevail in great things. He had, likewise, honour, which hath three things in it:—the vantage ground to do good,—the approach to kings and principal persons,—and the raising of a man's own fortune."

BACON.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXVIII.

for a conscientious desire to do their duty to all classes, and to guide their councils so as to preserve the interests of every portion of the community, whether commercial, manufacturing, or agricultural.

In addition to the imputation of a breach of faith, there has been another charge brought against us, less serious I confess, but which I am still very anxious to refute—I mean a something which has been presumed pretty generally, of some sudden change in the councils of His Majesty's Ministers with respect to the Corn Laws, since that question was brought under the consideration of this House, by the honourable member for Bridgenorth (Mr. W. Whitmore). There is, however, still a third charge, in addition to this inconsistency, which has been arrayed in argument against us since the commencement of this discussion. It is stated that my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade, (Mr. Huskisson) gave, in his place in this House, such an answer, in reply to a question from the honourable member for Shaftesbury (Mr. E. D. Davenport), as led to the belief that the bonded corn would not be meddled with this year. I do not presume to say that this account of that answer may not be perfectly correct, although I cannot speak from my own knowledge, not having been in my place at the time when it was given; but I say broadly, that if that answer was such as left the matter in doubt—if it was worded in general

terms, and so as to avoid the possibility of being committed to any specific and decided course—then it was unfair to draw from that answer any such inference as I have heard used in argument against us on the present occasion. I would contend even, that my right honourable friend did what was perfectly right and consistent with the practice of this House, in the manner in which he worded that reply.

Nothing is more common than for a responsible Minister of the Crown to evade a question, either of the affirmative or the contrary, by such expedients; and though I am quite certain that the honourable member for Shaftesbury is altogether blameless of any want of courtesy, either in seeking for that reply, or in allowing such inference to be drawn from it—and although I am equally certain he meant nothing more than to obtain information upon a subject which affected many general interests; yet surely he cannot be so innocent as not to see what consequences might result from such unguarded declarations. Would he consider it to be either politic or prudent, or at all consistent with the duty of a Minister at the head of the trade of this country, to give answers, upon the subject of his intentions with regard to a particular commodity, which might have the effect of raising that article perhaps fifty per cent. by the very next post? He would, I conceive, feel it to be perfectly justifiable for a

Minister, in such a situation, either not to answer at all, or to give such a reply as would avert consequences so injurious to those engaged in the particular trade to which the question might refer.

Questions are put every day in this House, the bearings of which are perhaps very little, if at all understood, either by those who put them, or by those sometimes who are called upon to answer them. I myself have been required to give replies on various occasions, to questions of which, perhaps, I saw the full consequences better afterwards than at the moment when I was called upon to speak; but I have no hesitation in saying, that had I not evaded them, or altogether refused a direct reply, I might have affected the interests of individuals in a degree which might hardly be credited. By the effect of inadvertently saying "Aye," upon one of these occasions, I might have created a rise in a certain species of property to the extent of full twenty per cent.; and, perhaps, by a simple "No," I might have depreciated it to a similar extent. I say, therefore, that questions upon such subjects cannot be fairly asked; and that, when asked, it would be difficult to give any other answer than an evasive one, if a Minister would fulfil properly the duties incumbent upon his situation. If I regret any thing upon this occasion, it is that my right honourable friend did not remain altogether silent;

but of this I am perfectly sure, that there was nothing in that answer which he intended to leave open to the inference which has been drawn from it.

I hope I have now cleared the question from some of those impediments, with regard to its proposers, which stood in the way of a free and impartial discussion of its own merits, and that the proposition will be allowed to stand upon its own grounds, unconnected with the private views or pledges of those who are called upon to submit it to the consideration of the House. While it remained involved by such opinions or prepossessions, I feel that it was not easy to prevent it from being mixed up with questions which gave it a very unfavourable colour, in the eyes of those who were called upon to decide upon it; but I trust that they will now look upon it—and I contend they ought so to look upon it—as a question supported by its own merit, and justified by its accordance with the soundest principles of policy. I do not mean to say, that if I thought the principles upon which I call for an assent to this measure right, I would not be prepared to uphold it upon that right; but I have the satisfaction to say, that we have now something more than mere theoretical right to support us, and that we have, even in the very short period which has elapsed since this question was agitated, gained the accession of some experience in de-

fence of our principles. I hope it will not be considered an unfair inference, that if I show what we have already done, and the expectation of what we are about to do, to be producing great good, I may be allowed to anticipate still greater good from the consummation of our intentions. The account of what we proposed upon the subject of the bonded corn reached Liverpool on Wednesday morning; and on this day there are letters in town, one of which has been put into my hand just before I came down to the House. It is not from any friend of mine, nor an acquaintance, nor a political supporter either of mine or of my right honourable friend who succeeded me in the honour of representing that city in this House; but, on the contrary, from a gentleman decidedly opposed to me in politics. I know him, however, to be a man of high honour, unquestioned integrity, and possessing great estimation as a mercantile character in the city where he resides. In this letter, dated from Liverpool, an extract of which I shall take the liberty of reading to the House, he says, "There has been a slight improvement to-day in Manchester goods; but the moment it became known that it was the intention of Ministers to introduce a measure for our relief, by removing the restrictions which kept the bonded corn out of the market, cotton could not be obtained at an advance of five per cent.; and there seemed to be

a very general restoration of confidence, arising from the feeling that Government would do all in their power to relieve the sufferers." This was the language of one letter. Since I entered the House, however, I have received another, which also is not addressed to me, or to any friend of mine, and I believe the writer to be opposed to me in politics. I know, however, that he is a person of respectability. His letter, dated 3d of May, runs thus:—"The account of what has been proposed by Ministers has made us all alive, and led to a very general improvement in trade. Holders of cotton are all speculating upon a rise; and there are no sellers to-day." Surely it could not be said, after this, that the measure recommended is not founded upon good principles; and, even if the practical effect may be in some measure over-rated, it must be a matter of congratulation to its proposers, and an encouragement to perseverance, when they see that the expectation of its effects is likely to produce a return of that confidence, without which the manufacturers cannot hope to be rescued from their present difficulties. I am quite prepared to admit that, because there is so much good anticipated from the first proposition—that of the admission of bonded corn—we are not therefore to infer that this is an argument for the second proposition. The good of the first proposition is plain and immediate; that to be anticipated from the second is distant

and depends on contingencies. The first proposition may stand alone upon its own grounds; but, although the second may rest upon a somewhat different foundation, it tends to the same principle. We are, Sir, with regard to the opposition to the second measure, driven to one of two propositions—either that the present Corn Laws are to remain the fixed and unaltered future laws of the country, or to declare at once that this is the time to alter them; a time of great distress—of unusual excitement—of extraordinary anxiety. If the latter course is to be followed, then we should be compelled to say, that our opinions are changed with respect to the time for altering the Corn Laws; but the contrary, as I said before, is the result of our reflections. My opinion with respect to the impropriety of that alteration has been confirmed; and the very circumstances which most recommended to me these temporary measures are, that they will enable us to dispense with that alteration of the laws which would prove at this moment highly inconvenient, and would lead to no beneficial result. I have never heard it asserted by any man, even the most strenuous opponent of these measures, that the Corn Laws should not undergo a revision: but I think that, at the present moment, such a revision would be a great misfortune; and I would declare that any man looked ill at our condition, who, complying with the pressure of the present

times and circumstances, would persist to the full extent in going into that inquiry which some consider advisable. An honourable baronet (Sir T. Lethbridge) has asked us, why we should do any thing, or what circumstances have called upon us to make any distinction between the present time, and that period in which the honourable member for Bridgenorth brought forward his proposition to the House? I do not myself, as far as regards the question, see any difference either; but I will endeavour to explain why I consider that we are called upon to consent to this proposition. For three weeks before the honourable member for Bridgenorth made his motion, there had been a gradual inclination to a rise in price; for three weeks since there has been the same: so that for six weeks—with the exception, I believe, of the last few days, when we can mark a slight decline—a constant tendency to rise has been visible in the corn market; and that rise has been accompanied by a state of terror and alarm; which, although I do not mean to make any prophecies of famine, indicates an approach to a state which no man can contemplate with satisfaction. The harvest of last year began a month earlier than usual, and the consumption of it began almost with the gathering in of the harvest. This year it may be a month later, and the people be obliged, in the absence of some measure like that now before the House, to subsist upon its produce for

fourteen months instead of twelve. In ordinary cases, and under other circumstances, such an evil might, perhaps, be without difficulty averted; but, I ask whether there is nothing in the present state of the country to call for more than ordinary caution and prudence upon the part of His Majesty's Government? The very fact, that the country will be without a Parliament for many months of the present year would be, in my opinion, alone sufficient to justify such caution. I repeat, however, that I do not by any means wish it to be understood that I am predicting misfortunes, which I am well aware may not, and which I hope and trust will not, occur. A fortnight of mild weather, and west wind, may insure us such a harvest as will render unnecessary all the precautions which we are now taking. I maintain, however, that it is as much the duty of Government to provide against a possible as a probable contingency. It cannot have escaped the recollection of gentlemen, that, in the year 1816, the prospect of a favourable harvest was changed in the course of a single night, and that the promise of the Monday was totally blighted on the Wednesday. Was it upon that occasion objected to the Government when they came down with a proposition, caused by this change of circumstances, that they were guilty of vacillation and a dereliction of principle? I know that gentlemen on the other side have said, and will say, that it is time enough to apply

the remedy when the evil is found to exist, and that a mild and mitigated harvest may put to flight all the fears which are now entertained. I admit the latter proposition; but I maintain that it is the duty of Government to guard against even the possibility of evil, especially when it is agreed on all hands, that it would be inexpedient to have recourse to the natural corrective which the operation of the present Corn Laws would afford. But it has been also objected by the opponents of the present measure, that it is unnecessary, because His Majesty's Ministers already possess the power of doing that which they call upon Parliament to sanction. I am willing to grant that we do constitutionally possess that power, if we choose to exercise it; but I will ask honourable members to look back with me to the history of the last century, and say whether there is not one instance during that period, which may act as a warning, if not an example, to the Ministers of the present day.

In the year 1766, the great Lord Chatham was at the head of the Administration of this country, and with him Lord Camden, the most popular lawyer this country ever saw, was associated. For a few months nothing could be more popular than their Government. A change of circumstances, however, arrived; and, during a period of scarcity, they were induced to exercise the power, which has lately been stated in this

House, by some honourable gentlemen whom I see on the opposite bench, as absolutely inherent in Government; namely, to take measures suspensive of, and even infringing the law, in order to provide for the *salus populi*. These eminent men, relying in part on the greatness of their power, and in part on their popularity, took the illegal, but, as every body admitted, the justifiable measure, under the circumstances, of doing the converse of that which it is said we ought to do, if the necessity arises—I mean what was equivalent to stopping the exportation, as we should be called upon to permit the importation of grain. As the law then stood, grain could be exported from this country up to a certain price. Famine stared them in the face, and they laid an embargo, stopping the exported grain. When Parliament met, the most violent debates ensued; and, what was singular, every man who spoke in those debates admitted the act was absolutely necessary to be done; yet, because they had done it precipitately, as it was said, and without a due regard to all the circumstances belonging to it, and without a sufficient sense of what they owed, in duty, to Parliament—against these two popular Ministers, the most stormy debates ensued, and the most violent attacks were made successfully in both Houses of Parliament.

If, then, in a case in some degree parallel, such was the result—if those two Ministers, so superio

in talents and popularity to any of those who compose the present Administration — became the objects of the most violent and successful attacks, in both Houses, because, at a period when Parliament was not sitting, they had taken upon themselves the responsibility of advising a measure which was, they considered, called for by the exigencies of the country—is it not a fair inference, to say that the exercise of a similar power upon the part of the present Government would be visited with at least equal obloquy, and call down equal opposition? Is it not an equally fair inference, to say, that had the Administration to which I allude been able to foresee the opposition by which their measure would be met, they would have waited for the meeting of Parliament before they ventured to bring it forward? Will any man, then, say, that His Majesty's Ministers, with this example before their eyes, are to be blamed, because, foreseeing a probable cause for anticipating a case calling for an interference with the existing law, they consult Parliament in the first instance, instead of waiting until the crisis comes, and then acting upon their own responsibility? "But," saythe opponents of the measure, "you have no need to come to Parliament for leave todo that which the Constitution empowers you to do—you are the responsible advisers of the Crown, and, as such, you have the power of carrying into effect the measure which you now propose." I

ask, whether this plea availed Lord Chatham or Lord Camden, when placed in circumstances where their claim to indulgence was much greater than ours would be, if, foreseeing, as we do, the possible occurrence of a situation calling for interference with the existing law, and having the power, which they had not, of consulting Parliament in the first instance, we neglected to do so?

Sir, what was recommended to us by several gentlemen, but more particularly by the honourable gentleman to whom I took the liberty of alluding, was, let things go on—let the necessity arise—then use the power with which you are intrusted, and then come to Parliament for a bill of indemnity. If the circumstances came on by surprise, Parliament not sitting, I would have done so, and I would have trusted to Parliament for indemnity; but when I see the spirit in which we are catechised for mooting it even as a possibility that we should have occasion to admit foreign corn, what earnest is that of the spirit in which we should be received if we had come afterwards for indemnity? Is it to be believed that the same gentlemen—who consider it as a sin against the landed interest that we conceive it possible the case may occur in which we should wish to act on that discretion—would, if we now acted on that discretion, without their previous knowledge and consent, have opened their arms to us with indemnity, when we came to render an account? Would not the first question asked by

them in that case have been, "What! had you no apprehension? Was there no indication of danger? What! were six weeks of a rise in prices nothing?" If we had acted without taking that warning, or without mentioning the fact, can we believe that the same gentlemen who are now unwilling to grant that discretion, would then be so willing to allow that it was justly taken, and would not have thrown the six weeks of a rise in prices in our face? It is now, forsooth, nothing to the purpose, that there is want stalking about the manufacturing districts. But do you believe that if we had acted, and then come for an indempity, we should not have been asked—"Were there no indications of the necessity?—Was there no discontent?—Were you quite ignorant that there was a small stock on hand? Had you no knowledge that the prices of grain had been gradually looking up for some time? Was there no danger to be apprehended from famine acting upon an excited and disaffected population?" I ask, Sir, if there would have been no language of this kind, and if we should not have had to encounter still greater opposition than that which bore down men so much greater than we can ever hope to be considered, and if their fate ought not at once to operate as a warning to deter us from a confidence which might prove fatal, and as a light to guide us to that course which is justified by experience? Should we not, I ask,

be worse than madmen, if, notwithstanding what we see, and what we know from the records of history, we were to plunge blindly into a difficulty from which it would be vain to call upon our advisers to extricate us? No other course, therefore, remained to us, but to come at once and ask for the sanction of Parliament. Our mere love of what we consider legal and constitutional constitutes all the difference between us and our opponents.

The fate of those who neglected Parliament operates but as a stimulus to the one course, and as an avoidance of the other. Sir, we may come at last to that crisis which we dread; we may be compelled, if Parliament refuses its consent to the measure we propose, and throws us back on the power of the Crown, to make use of the very means which we deprecate; but if we do, the responsibility rests not on us, but on the heads of those who not only desert their constitutional principles by refusing to enact the law, but even seem to think they have a sound argument in their desertion. These gentlemen say we have a power which we may use, and come before their tribunal for freedom from punishment; we wish the power to be granted, as by that tribunal, and that is the sole purport of the present measure. It is not my desire to agitate the country by any unnecessary apprehension. The time for the exercise of such a power may have never been more

distant; but it is the desire of His Majesty's Ministers, founded on the justifiable principle of a sound precaution, to receive such a license as they may exercise for the benefit of the community, should the necessity arise in those six weeks, when, perhaps, from a dissolution of Parliament, they might be unable to apply to it as the respository of that power, and when the danger might be too imminent to endure delay. And never let it be said, that it was a crime in a British Minister, that he prefers the sanction of Parliament to an arbitrary exercise of the prerogatives of the Crown. Well, then, we ask permission to do, not that which we are, by the Constitution, debarred from doing—for the very argument against it admits our right—but we ask permission to do that, which, if we do upon our own responsibility, we must afterwards come to ask Parliament to sanction by their approval. If Parliament were not sitting when the exigency occurred, there might be a very good reason for adopting the course which we recommend, unsanctioned by their approbation. But we have Parliament sitting, and, foreseeing the difficulty which may arise, we do that, which, if we neglected to do, would deservedly subject us to the imputation of having treated their authority with contempt. We might, perhaps, if we acted otherwise, adduce the case which occurred in the Administration of Lord Chatham and Lord Camden;

but we should, if we did so, be justly met with this answer—"True, they acted as you say; but then there was this slight difference between your respective cases. They acted upon their own responsibility, when no Parliament was sitting. You foresaw the danger, and yet you did not consent to consult a Parliament which was sitting long before the danger which you apprehended had occurred. The responsibility, therefore, rests upon yourselves, and you must take the consequences." The difference of the circumstances makes all the difference of conduct; and I say, that they who refuse to give us this sanction must take on themselves the consequence of the objection.

So again, I say, that if the Corn Law was one which, in the course of these debates, any one gentleman had said he was prepared and desirous to let go to its full operation, all these precautions might have been dispensed with. But what would become of the present difficulty? After the difficulty had been experienced, and when Parliament met again, do honourable gentlemen think they would come to the discussion with a better temper because it had gone to its full extent? It is therefore, Sir, that I say to gentlemen of the landed interest that this is their question, and it is for their protection I bring it forward. I bring it forward because I am sure, that till the question can be discussed in another session

—probably in another Parliament—it is better the law should remain, as it has hitherto done, almost a dead letter in its operation. I am sure that we did good last year by interposing the bonded corn—that we do good now to them by interposing the bonded corn this year; and that we provide for their advantage by taking a power to interpose again between the extreme operation of the law, and the consequence to the agriculturists. Sir, it remains to state only the measure of responsibility which we propose to ask of Parliament. We propose to ask a sanction for the exercise of the responsible discretion which is not only admitted, but contended to exist in the Crown, in the case of an emergency. I said, on a former night, that so far from creating an extensive discretion, there was no mode of limiting it, consistent with its object, on the one part, and consistent on the other with a faithful adherence to the assurance that we did not wish to anticipate the discussion of the Corn Laws—that we did not earnestly desire. The Resolution which I have to propose to the House is this—"That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient to empower His Majesty, by any order or orders of His Majesty in Council, to permit, under certain regulations, and for a time to be limited, the entry for home consumption of an additional quantity of foreign corn, meal, or flour, subject to the duties which may be imposed by an act to be

passed in this session of Parliament." In the course of the former debate, I observed that there were three modes by which the proposed Resolution could be restricted; first, by the imposition of a duty; secondly, by a restriction as to price; and thirdly, by a limitation in the quantity. Upon that occasion, an honourable and learned gentleman opposite (Mr. Brougham) objected, and with great appearance of justice, to the first of these modes—the imposition of a duty; while another honourable member expressed himself unfavourable to the second, upon the ground that it fixed too low a maximum of price. Now I am disposed to yield to the suggestions of both the honourable members; and, doing away with the limitation as to price and duty, to retain that of quantity alone. Another honourable gentleman suggested a limitation in the price, and proposed that wheat should not be admitted until it had risen to 65*s*. the quarter. This appears to me, on reflection, to be liable to the same objections, that it may be considered as fixing the rate at which importation should, in future, always take place. In one state of the country, 65*s*. might be a very high price, and might press very heavily; whereas, in a more flourishing condition, it might be comparatively cheap; and this variation in the pressure of the same nominal amount of price appears to be a decided objection to this mode of regulating the importation. For these reasons I think that the

third mode is the best, namely, a limitation of the quantity to be imported. By this mode we leave the Corn Laws exactly as they were; we lay down no new principles—create no prejudices. It becomes a mere temporary measure in all its circumstances, accomplishing the object for which it was intended, without leaving any sting behind. As to the quantity beyond which importation shall not extend, that must be in some degree arbitrary; but, in the absence of any more commanding principle of action, I propose such a quantity as, together with the corn to be released from bond, shall make one half of the greatest importation ever made. According to this mode of estimating the quantity, I shall propose 500,000 quarters as the limit in point of quantity. I do not know how to explain the nature and meaning of that limitation better than by reading the heads of a bill (worded technically, of course, and subject to revision and correction), which I mean to found upon the Resolution with which I shall conclude. [The right honourable gentleman here read the heads of the bill, which were as follow:] —"Whereas an Act has been passed in the present session of Parliament, to permit the entry for home consumption of the foreign grain, meal, and flour which were in the warehouses of the United Kingdom on the 2d of May, 1826; and it may be expedient, from circumstances which cannot now be foreseen, to admit, before the com-

mencement of the next session of Parliament, a further limited quantity of foreign corn for home consumption, before such corn would be admissible under the laws now in force, relating to the importation of the said corn.—Be it therefore enacted, &c. that it shall be lawful for His Majesty, at any time, from and after the close of the present, and until the commencement of the next session of Parliament, by and with the advice of His Majesty's Privy Council, to issue an order, or orders, to permit the entry for home consumption, either of the whole, or of any proportion, of the foreign wheat, and of flour made of wheat, which may be in the warehouses of this country at the date of the issuing such order or orders, respectively; provided always, that the quantity of foreign wheat or flour so to be admitted under order or orders, shall not exceed 500,000 quarters (500,000 quarters in the whole). Provided also, that no such order shall be in force for more than two months from the time of its being issued; and that any wheat, or flour made of wheat, in bond, which may have been included in such order, and which shall not have been taken out and entered for home consumption, according to the terms and conditions to be specified in such order, before the expiration of the period specified in such order, shall not be entitled to the benefit of such order. That it shall be lawful for His Majesty in Council, by any such order as

aforesaid, to require, as one of the conditions for admitting such foreign wheat or flour to enter for home consumption, that it shall, upon such entry, pay such duty as the said order may direct, not exceeding any duty now imposed under the Act of his present Majesty, entitled 'An Act relating to the Importation of Foreign Corn.'"

By proposing to limit the importation of corn to the quantity provided for in the bill, I think we shall have fully provided for the probable wants of the people during the interval between the two Parliaments. That is the great object which His Majesty's Ministers have had in view; and whatever objection may apply to the measure, either in principle or detail, I trust we shall, at least, be free from the imputation of having acted with bad faith towards the landed interest. It is an imputation which, as far as I am concerned, I most unequivocally disavow, and I can answer with equal sincerity for my colleagues. At all events, I am convinced that we should not have discharged our duty if we had taken the responsibility upon ourselves, and had declined to apply to Parliament for their sanction to the measure which I have now the honour to propose.

The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving the following Resolution:—

"That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient to empower His Majesty, by any order or orders of His Majesty in Council, to permit, under certain regu-

lations, and for a time to be limited, the entry, for home consumption, of an additional quantity of foreign corn, meal, or flour, subject to the duties which may be imposed, by an Act to be passed in this Session of Parliament."

The Resolution was agreed to.

STATE OF SLAVERY.

MAY 19th, 1826.

Mr. Brougham moved the following Resolution:—

"That this House has observed with deep regret that nothing effectual has been done by the Legislatures of His Majesty's Colonies in the West Indies, in compliance with the declared wishes of His Majesty's Government, and the Resolutions of this House of the 15th of May, 1823, touching the condition of the Slaves; and this House will, therefore, early in the next Session of Parliament, take into its most serious consideration such measures as may appear to be necessary for giving effect to the said Resolutions."

Mr. Canning rose, and addressed the House to the following effect:—The honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Denman) who spoke last, Sir, has brought the question which is now before the House, precisely to that point at which I am desirous of meeting it.

The practical point to be decided is, whether the Resolution now proposed for its adoption, is likely to be useful, or otherwise, for the purposes for which I am bound to believe it is intended? That Resolution contains, indeed, some propositions, to which, as abstract propositions, I have no difficulty (with certain modifications) in subscribing. But the questions for the House, on the present occasion, I take to be—not whether the Resolution be abstractedly true, but whether the passing of any such Resolution as this be either necessary or advisable? and if it be neither necessary nor advisable, whether it may not be rather detrimental than beneficial to the general object upon which the House has already expressed its determination.

In addressing myself to these questions, I must lay out of the account much—indeed the greater part—of the speech of one honourable and learned gentleman (Dr. Lushington); because it has been already determined by the House, and by the Government, to proceed in this great measure, as far as possible, by means of conciliation and recommendation; but the whole of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech was directed rather to means of force and terror. That speech, therefore, I must pass by, as entirely dissonant from the whole tone and temper in which the discussion of this matter has been hitherto conducted; and especially from the labo-

rious and temperate speech with which this Resolution has been introduced for our deliberation.

I must assume, Sir, that the Resolutions passed by this House, in May 1823, constitute the rule which Parliament have agreed to take for their guidance; and I must also assume (the position which I have just stated not being contradicted) that the several measures which the Government have founded on those Resolutions, are admitted to have been conceived in the spirit of those Resolutions, and to have been framed in accordance with that spirit.

If, Sir, there be those who think that a different course from that which the House of Commons has pursued, ought to have been adopted; if there be those who are even disposed to go back to the year 1807, and to contend that the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, ought to have been then enforced by the same Act of Parliament which abolished the trade in slaves, I have really only to say to them that they come too late into the field; that Parliament has already taken its determination, and formed its decision on that subject. I must remind them that Parliament has already declared, in a way not to be misunderstood, that it would not enact the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies; that it looks to that result only through a sober and gradual course of measures; that it will not be diverted from that course, except by a degree of

resistance, amounting to contumacy, on the part of the West Indian colonies, which it will not at present apprehend.

If there be those again who think that this important question, involving, as it confessedly does, the lives, the interests, and the property of our fellow subjects, is to be determined on the abstract proposition—" That man cannot be made the property of man,"—I take the liberty of relegating them to the schools; and of telling them that they do not deal with this grave and complicated matter as members of the British Parliament, or as members of a society constituted like that in which we live, of long established interests, of conflicting claims to protection, of modifications and involutions of property, not to be changed and simplified by a sudden effort, and of usages which, however undesirable, if the question were as to their new institution, are too inveterately rooted to be destroyed at a single blow. I must tell them, Sir, that the practical adoption of their speculative notions would expose our West India possessions to ravage and desolation; which, I think, those honourable gentlemen themselves would be as little satisfied to behold, as I hope they are prepared, wilfully to produce them.

The learned civilian, referring to a former debate, has quoted a passage of a speech of mine, wherein I stated, " that the spirit of the British Consti-

tution was, in its principle, hostile to any modification of slavery." This reference compels me to set myself right with the House. The learned civilian has read the extract from the speech, but he has not given the context from which it is torn. Sir, the honourable member for Weymouth had, on that occasion, prefaced his proposed Resolution with a declaration, that "the state of slavery was repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion." Did I subscribe to that proposition? Can the sentence quoted by the learned civilian be fairly understood in that sense? In order that the House should rightly understand what I did say, I will read that part of my speech of that day to which the quoted sentence belongs.

"The honourable gentleman (it is the honourable member for Weymouth to whom I am alluding) begins his Resolution with a recital which I confess greatly embarrasses me. He says, that 'the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution, and of the Christian religion,' God forbid that he who ventures to object to this statement should therefore be held to assert a contradiction to it! I do not say that the state of slavery is consonant to the principles of the British Constitution; still less do I say that the state of slavery is consonant to the principles of the Christian religion. But though I do not advance these propositions myself, neverthe-

less, I must say, that in my opinion the propositions of the honourable gentleman are not practically true. If the honourable gentleman means that the British Constitution does not admit of slavery in that part of the British dominions where the Constitution is in full play, undoubtedly his statement is true; but it makes nothing for his object. If, however, the honourable member is to be understood to maintain that the British Constitution has not *tolerated* for years, nay, more, for centuries, *in the colonies*, the existence of slavery—a state of society unknown in the mother country—that is a position which is altogether without foundation, and positively and practically untrue. In my opinion, when a proposition is submitted to this House, for the purpose of inducing the House to act upon it, care should be taken not to confound, as I think is done in this Resolution, what is morally true with what is historically false. Undoubtedly, the spirit of the British Constitution is, in its principle, hostile to any modification of slavery; but as undoubtedly, the British Parliament has for ages, tolerated, sanctioned, protected, and even encouraged a system of colonial establishment of which it well knew slavery to be the foundation."

Here I do not say that slavery is sanctioned by the spirit of the Christian religion; and as little do I say, that it is sanctioned by the principles of the British Constitution. But, although I do not

advance any such proposition in opposition to that of the honourable member for Weymouth, still I do say, that his proposition is not practically true. If the honourable and learned gentleman meant to say, that the spirit of the British Constitution is adverse to slavery, I admit the truth of his proposition; but it makes nothing for his argument. If he meant to say, that the British Constitution has not for years tolerated slavery in its colonies, then it is quite evident that his proposition is positively and practically untrue. I contended then, as I contend now, that care ought to be taken, in touching questions of this nature, not to mingle and confound what is morally true with what is historically false. I admitted then, as I admit now, that the Constitution of this country is adverse to the practice or principle of slavery; but, I affirmed then, and I now repeat the affirmation, that the Parliament of this country has protected, fostered, and encouraged establishments, whose main support, it well knew, was derived from slavery. Guarded then, Sir, as my declaration on this subject was at the beginning, guarded as it was at the end, I think the learned gentleman did not do quite fairly,—did not act, in respect to my speech, as he would have acted professionally in the citation of any document in a court of justice,—when he separated a single sentence, or rather member of a sentence, from the rest, and presented it to the

House, as a simple, direct, substantive, and unqualified proposition.

The learned gentleman seems, indeed, to think that he is at liberty to construe my speech of three years ago by comparison with something which passed the other day, in another place; of which, as stated by himself, I profess I do not see the practical bearing upon my argument (such as I have now shown that argument to have been);—but of which I know absolutely nothing but what the assertion of the honourable and learned gentleman conveys to me. The distinction I now wish to press upon the attention of the House, is the same as I have always endeavoured to maintain. I have before said, that theoretically true as it may be, that the spirit of slavery is repugnant to the spirit of the British Constitution, yet this country, blessed though she has been with a free Constitution herself, has encouraged in her colonies the practice of slavery, however alien to her own domestic institutions; and this, too, be it remembered, at a time when her councils were guided by men, the acknowledged and boasted friends of liberty. I will not stop to enter into a disquisition whether, at the time to which I refer, the duties of governments, and the rights of man, as man, were as fully understood as in the age in which we have the happiness to live; whether the freedom of England had then attained that moral maturity which it now exhibits. Be that as it may, the

simple fact is, that this country, notwithstanding her free Constitution, did found and maintain, nay, more, did foster and prescribe a system, of which, not only was slavery an ingredient, but which required an annual influx of the black Stygian stream of slavery for its nutriment and sustentation.

But there was another part of the proposition put forth by the honourable member for Weymouth, on the occasion to which the learned civilian has alluded, viz.—that the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the Christian religion. To this, Sir, I objected, not, certainly, meaning thereby to degrade the Christian religion by the imputation that it was tolerant of slavery; but meaning to free this country from the necessity which would result from the adoption of the honourable gentleman's doctrine—the necessity of proceeding, without pause or hesitation, not merely to the immediate modification and gradual abolition of slavery in the colonies, but to its instant and total extirpation. What I meant to deny in the honourable member's proposition was, that the Christian religion and slavery could not be in existence together. I said that the reverse is the fact;—that they have co-existed from the very dawn of christianity up to the present day. Neither, therefore, am I forced to admit that it is a principle of the Christian religion to sanction slavery. The course of the Christian religion has

always been to adapt itself to the circumstances of the place and time in which it was seeking to make a progress; to accommodate itself to all stations of life, to all varieties of acting or of suffering; restraining the high, exalting the lowly, by precepts applicable to all diversities of situation; and alike contributing to the happiness of man, and providing for his welfare, whether connected with his highest destinies, or descending with him to his lowest degradation,—whether mounting the throne of the Cæsars, or comforting the captive in his cell.

But while christianity has thus blessed and improved mankind, its operation has not been direct, precipitate, or violent. It has invaded no existing rights or relations, it has disturbed no established modes of government or law. It has rendered and recommended obedience to temporal power, even where that power was exercised with no light hand, and administered through no mild or uncorrupted institutions. While the doctrines of christianity were preaching in the streets of Rome,—"*servi cruciantur*" continued to be the ordinary form of process in the FORUM, not for the punishment of the slave who had been convicted of a crime, but for extracting evidence from one produced as a witness.

Then, Sir, it is not true, that the Christian religion prescribes the extinction of slavery, with un-

sparing, uncompromising, indiscriminating haste. It is not true that christianity ordains the extirpation of this great moral evil by other means than those which are consonant with the just spirit of the British Constitution,—means of equity and good faith, as well as of well-understood humanity· measures moderate in their character, and pro gressive in their operation.

Is there any thing, then, Sir, in what I have laid down to inculpate the spirit of christianity or the principles of the British constitution? If the British Government, and the British Parliament, have for a long series of years fostered that system upon which we all now look with abhorrence, what is the fair inference?—Is it that we are to continue to foster and cherish it still?—No, Sir; that is not what I maintain: but I do maintain that we, having all concurred in the guilt of rearing and fostering the evil, are not to turn round upon the planters, and say, "*you* alone shall suffer all the penalty;—we determine to get rid of this moral pestilence, which infects our character as much as yours, which *we* have as much contributed to propagate as *you;* but *you,* as spotted lepers, shall be banished from our society, and cast to utter ruin, to expiate our common crime."

Sir, I propose that we proceed with more deliberate counsel, and a more even hand. The House has already resolved so to proceed; and the question for decision, therefore, this night is,

whether the Resolution now offered for adoption is conceived in that even spirit, and bears the stamp of that temperate deliberation?

In order to decide this question, let us look where we now stand. The Resolutions of May, 1823, form the ground upon which we have hitherto proceeded:—Is there, then, reason to believe that the Government have acted upon those Resolutions otherwise than in the most perfect sincerity? and have not the Government avowed their determination, if the colonies should evince a contumacious resistance, to call upon Parliament for aid?

If we have acted with sincerity on the views sanctioned by Parliament, and if we have not departed from the declaration of our determination to come to Parliament for aid, if necessary,—wherefore now adopt a Resolution, which, if it is not necessary for the furtherance of the views of Government, must of necessity perplex them? We have already had, in the course of the session, two motions connected with this subject. Upon one of them, that relating to certain trials of slaves in the West Indies, I moved an amendment, expressive of the disgust naturally felt at some of the scenes brought under the notice of the House on that occasion; and declaring that we saw in those scenes only greater reason to adhere to the Resolutions of 1823. If, therefore, the Resolution proposed to us this night were no more than a

renewal of our former declarations, it would amount to nothing—it would be powerless, it would be useless.

But it is no such thing. Let us examine what it is. In the first place, it expresses regret at the proceedings of the West Indian Legislatures. To this part of it I can have no objection, further than that it would be a waste of time to record over again what we have already recorded. But the second part of the Resolution pledges the House to follow up this declaration with measures, not defined, in the ensuing session. To that part I have a decided objection. I think that to pledge ourselves to such a declaration would be productive of positive mischief.

I, Sir, do not despair, that, in the course of the six or eight months which may intervene between the present and ensuing session, the West Indian Legislatures may adopt measures in the spirit of the recommendations sent out to them. I think their disposition to do this would be weakened by a pledge of the nature proposed. They would argue, that we knew not our own minds; that, dissatisfied with the course which we had already taken, we now stood pledged to resort to some other undefined mode of legislation; that whatever might have been, up to this period, the views of Government, the House of Commons had stepped in and changed them. In this way would the Jamaica Legislature have a right to argue. Would

it, then, Sir, be prudent to abandon at once expectations which the West Indian Legislatures will not be so absurd and impolitic (to use no harsher epithet) as to disappoint, by signifying to them that we are not satisfied with our own course, and warning them thereby to wait and see what farther steps we may be disposed to take, on another plan, and in a different direction?

An honourable friend of mine (Mr. C. Ellis), Sir, who has done himself so much credit by his speech to-night, has asked me, whether he is to understand the Order in Council respecting Trinidad as compromising the whole of the system of the Government? My answer is, that so far as the Resolutions of this House prescribe to Government the course to be pursued, so far the Order in Council in question does comprise the intentions of Government. If the Colonial Legislatures act *bona fide* up to the spirit of that order, with a manifest desire not merely

> "To keep the word of promise to the ear,
> And break it to the hope;"

not by evasive or illusory enactments,—but with a full and fair intention to carry substantially into effect the meliorations recommended to them, I am convinced that the views of Parliament will be accomplished. It is to the spirit of the proceedings of the West Indian Legislatures that we shall look; and the Government, and, I believe,

the Parliament, are disposed to look to it with confidence and candour.

My honourable friend has particularly adverted to the clause for compulsory manumission of slaves. It is undoubtedly the main clause of the whole. It is the only one that is *directly* operative. All the rest go to mitigate, to improve, to regulate the system of slavery; to render it more tolerable in its existence, and to prepare its gradual decay. *This* clause is the *way out of* that system,—the opening by which slavery itself may *escape*, gradually, and, as it were, imperceptibly, without the shock of a convulsion.

The great difference between the plans of His Majesty's Ministers and those of the honourable gentlemen who are desirous of a more rapid progress is this,—that those honourable gentlemen would risk great dangers—would risk even the frustration of their own object, for the hope of arriving at it immediately; whereas we would rather postpone a little the attainment of the object, in order that we may arrive at it with a greater assurance of safety.

I agree, Sir, in many particulars, with an honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Bernal), who has spoken with so much good sense; but I differ from him widely on the subject of compensation.

I think nothing could be more monstrous than to admit a claim of compensation into a system of measures which are purely measures of ameliora-

tion; and which all who look upon the moral improvement of the slave as beneficial to the interests of the master, must acknowledge to be calculated to create eventually an advance instead of a deterioration in the value of the master's property in his slaves. I admit, at the same time, that the principle of compulsory manumission, being one of force (though qualified so as to guard against danger), *there* it is that the principle of compensation properly finds its place. The price which the manumitted slave will have to pay to his owner,—augmenting, as it naturally must do, in proportion to the improved value of the slave, is the medium through which that just compensation will be administered.

Sir, although the discussion upon this question has been long, and although many foreign topics have been introduced into it, I am not aware of any other practical points, beside those I have already touched upon, which call for answer or explanation. Nor would it be consistent with what I have said of the inopportuneness of these repeated discussions, to protract that of to-night beyond the limits of the question on which the vote of the House is to be taken.

I have endeavoured to show, that while I willingly admit that the dictates of humanity, the principles of the Christian religion, and the spirit of the British Constitution repudiate slavery, there is nothing in that admission which calls upon us

to abolish the system, however odious, with a violence and precipitancy, the effect of which would be to bring down ruin upon a large class of our fellow subjects, and to exchange the evils of slavery for those of anarchy and bloodshed. I hope that I have also shown that the Government is sincere in its endeavour to carry into effect the wishes of Parliament, wisely, temperately, soberly, in the spirit in which those wishes were conceived. But I also hope that I shall have made it clear to those whose interests are more directly involved in this great question, and whose agency is necessary to the satisfactory solution of it, that what we profess to do with temperance and soberness, we are, at the same time, determined to do, or to see done. I trust it will be understood, that it is only because we do not like any thing which has the appearance of menace, that I have not to-night distinctly repeated the declaration, that if, contrary to our hope, we should be met by the colonies with contumacious opposition, we shall come to Parliament for aid—an aid which Parliament will not hesitate in granting, to carry into execution its own wholesome and holy determination.

The House divided—

For Mr. Brougham's Resolution	38
Against it	100
Majority	62

OPENING OF THE SESSION.

NOVEMBER 21st, 1826.

THE HON. T. LIDDELL moved an Address, which, as usual, was an echo of the Speech from the Throne.

MR. G. WINN (member for Maldon), seconded the Address.

MR. BROUGHAM complained of a deviation from the established practice of giving to members, especially to the younger ones, the opportunity of knowing, and of considering, before-hand, the principal topics adverted to in the speech to be delivered at the opening of a session. The honourable and learned gentleman proceeded to advert to the various topics introduced into the speech. He particularly complained of the omission of Ireland in the speech, or of any allusion to the affairs of that country. He also complained of the vague and unsatisfactory manner in which retrenchment in the public expenditure was adverted to. Besides, it was quite inconsistent with the declaration of the intended retrenchment to project the construction of palaces, of architectural beauties, and ornamental improvements. The honourable and learned gentleman concluded by enforcing the necessity of tranquillizing Ireland, and of keeping England peaceable by every possible reduction of public expenditure.

MR. SECRETARY CANNING said:—I am really, Sir, somewhat at a loss to know what the honour-

able and learned gentleman requires when he speaks of the barrenness of information in the speech from the throne, and of the necessity of amplification under which, as he says, the honourable mover and seconder of the Address felt themselves in consequence. Nor can I exactly understand the justice of the complaint which we have heard in such loud tones from the honourable and learned gentleman, with respect to the discontinuance of the usage of communicating the contents of the royal speech on the evening before its delivery from the throne. I undoubtedly recollect that, during the early period of my experience in Parliament, it was the custom, the night before the commencement of a session, to read to such members as might think proper to assemble to hear it, at a place called the Cock-Pit, the speech with which the King's Ministers had advised His Majesty to open the session. Various inconveniences, however, which resulted from that practice have long occasioned its discontinuance; nor can I now understand the tendency of the complaint made by the honourable and learned gentleman, nor conjecture what advantage would have been derived from bringing the speech prematurely before the public. Let it also, Sir, be recollected that, with the discontinuance of a communication of the intended speech a few hours before its delivery, has grown up another custom, which must materially coun-

teract any evil, if evil there be, resulting from such discontinuance; namely, that it is not now usual to insert in the speech any passages which may call in the Address for any pledge by the House of the precise course which they may deem it expedient to adopt; and, therefore, that in the present day, the speech requires nothing in the Address beyond an ordinary and courteous reciprocation of good dispositions. If the honourable and learned gentleman thinks there is any thing in the Address which will preclude any honourable gentleman who may assent to it from taking whatever parliamentary course he may deem most advisable, with respect to any of the important questions that may come under our discussion, he opposes it on fair and intelligible grounds. But it is notorious, that that is not the case; and that on this, the first day of the first session of a new Parliament, no attempt whatever has been made to pledge beforehand those who may concur in the Address to the support of any measures which His Majesty's Ministers may think it their duty to propose or advocate. There really never was a speech from the throne which, in compliance with the modern usage to which I have been adverting, less distinctly called for any such pledge, than the speech which is now under our consideration. The truth is, Sir, that Parliament has been assembled at the present season, which, especially since the Union, is undoubtedly

a very inconvenient period of the year, not for the purpose of precipitating any of those important discussions which require the fullest attendance and the most patient deliberation, but because, in defence of the laws and of the Constitution of the country, it has been thought right to call Parliament together to provide an indemnity for His Majesty's Government, in consequence of the measure by which, although under what appeared to them to be a great and urgent necessity, they violated those laws and that Constitution. It is true, Sir, that without offering any very great insult to the laws or to the Constitution, and that, without any very extravagant stretch of the royal prerogative, the meeting of Parliament might, perhaps, in the present instance, have been deferred. But although His Majesty's Ministers felt that the postponement might, in this case, have taken place without any great impropriety, they also felt that the precedent of postponement might be mischievous. Although they felt as sure of the approbation of Parliament for the step which they took, as men can be who are conscious that they only did that to which they were prompted by an over-ruling necessity, they also felt that they should have been wanting in duty to the King, and in respect to the Constitution, if they did not advise His Majesty to summon Parliament expressly for the purpose of passing judgment on the extent of the necessity to which

they submitted, and on the soundness of the discretion which they had exercised. On this subject, Sir, much as I have reason, in common with the House at large, to admire the speech of the honourable seconder of the Address, and much as I have reason to be personally thankful to the honourable gentleman for many of the sentiments which he so ably expressed, I cannot say that I shall be disposed to claim the approbation of the House, precisely on the grounds stated by my honourable friend. I am very far from thinking that that is the best possible state of the law on this important question, which requires this occasional and irregular interposition of His Majesty's Government. I am the last man in this House to argue that such a condition of the law is desirable; for it may be remembered, that among the motives which were urged by me, towards the conclusion of the last session of Parliament, to induce the House to agree to the bill for the introduction of bonded corn, was the expediency of diminishing, as much as possible, the necessity for the exercise of any discretion on the subject, on the part of His Majesty's Government. The object, therefore, which we have in view in the proposed Bill of Indemnity is, not to elicit the approbation of Parliament of any general measure, but to obtain a particular sanction for a particular measure, arising from an evident and unavoidable necessity.

If, however, the honourable and learned gentleman complains that His Majesty's speech does not contain any direct intimation of the course which it is His Majesty's Ministers' intention to pursue, with respect to a subject which at present agitates the feelings of so large a portion of the community, he will perhaps be satisfied when I assure him and the House that at a very early period after our next meeting, I shall be prepared, on the part of His Majesty's Government, to propose such measures with regard to the Corn Laws, as in their opinion will be beneficial to the country, and conciliatory towards all the great interests involved in the determination of the question. At least, Sir, it shall be shown, that His Majesty's Ministers have no disposition to shrink from the subject; and I again pledge myself, as the organ of His Majesty's Government, that many weeks shall not elapse after our meeting again, before I bring it under the consideration of the House. Such being the case, I trust that I shall not be considered as saying any thing disrespectful to the House, when I declare that I will not be provoked into any premature or partial discussion of a question which demands the most full and deliberate consideration. The honourable and learned gentleman has said that the honourable seconder of the Address, in adverting to that passage of the King's speech which declares, that "the estimates for the ensuing year shall be

formed with as much attention to economy as the exigencies of the public service will admit," appeared to entertain an alarm that the economy alluded to would be excessive; while, on the other hand, he himself was exceedingly apprehensive that it would fall infinitely short of what was requisite. Really, Sir, we ought to feel some satisfaction at having framed a paragraph with such skill as to excite opinions so contradictory.

The honourable and learned gentleman, however, says that it is an indefinite expression. Indefinite it necessarily must be, unless it had been practicable to introduce details; but I do assure the honourable and learned gentleman that the most extravagant construction which his powerful imagination can put on the apprehension of the honourable seconder of the Address, is not more extravagant than the antagonist apprehension which the honourable and learned gentleman himself professes to entertain. The honourable and learned gentleman appears to have "some monster in his thoughts," the nature of which it is impossible for me to conjecture. All I can say is, that there is nothing in the contemplation of His Majesty's Ministers which can justify the honourable and learned gentleman's alarm at that, whatever it may be, for which, having no place in His Majesty's speech, the honourable and learned gentleman imagines a place

elsewhere. [Mr. Brougham said something across the table, which was indistinctly audible in the House.]

Then really, Sir, the honourable and learned gentleman has thrown a great deal of very good indignation away. I should be glad to know on what terms His Majesty's Government could secure themselves from the imputation of criminal expense, on the part of the honourable and learned gentleman. I grant, Sir, that if the honourable and learned gentleman thinks we ought, on the spur of a temporary pressure, to cut down and change all the existing establishments of the country—I grant that if that is the honourable and learned gentleman's project, no such thing is in our intention; nor, I am sure, would any such proceeding receive the sanction of this House, nor of the people at large, whom it professed to benefit. The honourable and learned gentleman thinks that the best accompaniment and consolation to a suffering people is the suspension of all public buildings. I am of a contrary opinion. I think that a prosecution of public works must be available to their relief. To me it appears that if people want bread it is a strange remedy for their distress, to suspend the employment by which alone they can procure it. While the character of the country remains what it is, the decent splendour of the Crown, and the comfort of the people, will never be considered incompatible objects: the dignity of high stations

will not be regarded with an envious eye; nor will one class of the community find any consolation for their own evils in pulling down another. Not apprehending that any such disposition exists in any part of the public, I can assure the honourable and learned gentleman that it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to carry economy to such an extent as to induce that public to turn round and charge us with going into an extreme. The honourable and learned gentleman is dissatisfied with the declaration in the speech, that "the estimates shall be formed with as much attention to economy as the exigencies of the public service will permit." Does the honourable and learned gentleman suppose that there are no exigencies in the public service? Has this country no station to maintain? Is nothing required from us towards the maintenance of tranquillity in Europe? May we not, at a moderate charge, prevent the occurrence of an evil which, in a single twelvemonth, would plunge us into an expense greater than an ill judged economy would balance in a course of years? His Majesty says, in his speech, that he "is exerting himself with unremitting anxiety, either singly, or in conjunction with his allies, as well to arrest the progress of existing hostilities, as to prevent the interruption of peace in different parts of the world." Does the honourable and learned gentleman believe, that, in order to effect this object, it is

not necessary to maintain considerable establishments? If we look at the new world, are there not contests going on which humanity requires should be put an end to? In Europe, have we not an ally whose condition solicits our aid; an ally in such a situation that any hesitation or fluctuation of policy, on our part, might invite an attack upon her? May not our presence on the spot prevent an aggression on the power to which I allude? Is not the English fleet now in the Tagus, an obviously wise and economical expense? Will it not be advisable to continue that expense, if it is calculated to prevent an explosion, the consequences of which no one can foresee? Do not let it be supposed, by my adopting this illustration of the necessity of a certain establishment, that it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to meddle with the internal affairs of other countries. I trust we know the limits of our duty too well. It is our duty to take care that the frontiers of Portugal shall not be crossed by an offensive army; but it is not our duty to give one faction, or party, an ascendancy over the rest. The force which we maintain at Lisbon, therefore, is maintained, not with any view of interfering in the internal affairs of Portugal; not with any view of intimidating any party in Portugal; but simply with a view to prevent such acts of foreign hostility as, in their consequences, might involve Europe in the horrors of war. It

is on that ground, Sir, that I take our conduct towards Portugal as an illustration of the wisdom and necessity of maintaining certain establishments; and I challenge the honourable and learned gentleman, who desires us to cut down all our establishments, to put his hand at this moment on any of our establishments as unnecessary, in which I will not show that there are the seeds of safety; in which I will not show that there are the roots of a well ordered, a well regulated, and a permanent economy. That is the sense in which the speech from the throne adverts to possible exigencies of the public service. There is no intention, under that name, to shelter any of those extravagant propositions, the probability of which the honourable and learned gentleman appears to contemplate. There is no part of the policy now pursued by His Majesty's Government, dependent on the establishments of the country, which I am not ready to go through, point by point, and show its real efficacy and ultimate economy; and that, Sir, as I conceive, is the only possible answer which I can give to the conjectures of the honourable and learned gentleman.

With regard to the condition of Ireland, I shall only observe, that the absence of any topic in the speech from the throne, does not at all preclude Parliament from entertaining the consideration of that topic, if it should think fit so to do. The speech states those points alone respecting

which it is intended by His Majesty's Government to call on Parliament to adopt some proceeding. It is not our intention, at present, to bring before Parliament any specific measure respecting Ireland; but that will not prevent any individual member from agitating the subject. I will not, however, be tempted by what has fallen from the honourable and learned gentleman, to say another word about it. The honourable and learned gentleman knows as well as I do, that if, in the course of the session, the question to which I allude should come under consideration, I shall be ready to meet—not the honourable and learned gentleman, for our opinions on the question agree—but the question itself, as I always have met it, with the most anxious and determined attention. Sir, not having been able exactly to understand the purpose of the honourable and learned gentleman's speech; but understanding that he does not mean to object to the Address, I have perhaps said enough on the present occasion; but I cannot sit down without congratulating the House on the accession of talent which they have gained in the honourable member (Mr. Liddell) who opened the debate of this evening. I trust, from the promising commencement of that honourable member's parliamentary career, that he will not confine himself to an occasional display, but that he will illustrate, by the display of his abilities, the various important questions which, from time to time, come under

our consideration. I may also be allowed to say, that so far from my feeling the part which the honourable mover and seconder have taken this night the less acceptable in consequence of their declarations;—that they are determined to exercise their own judgments on the subjects which may come under their consideration;—that they will endeavour to keep their minds free from prejudice and open to conviction;—and that they are resolved to mix a general support of His Majesty's Government with a general spirit of independence, I experience the greatest pleasure in hearing the statement. Such are the minds from whom we hope for the most beneficial, because the most honourable aid; and it is only with such qualifications, and under such restrictions, that His Majesty's Government ask the support of any man who now sits in this House for the first time.

Two amendments were moved, the one by Mr. Hume, which was negatived by a majority of eighty-three, and the other by Mr. Grattan, which was negatived by a majority of seventy-seven, after which the original Address was agreed to.

ARIGNA MINING COMPANY.

DECEMBER 5th, 1826.

MR. ALDERMAN WAITHMAN moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the origin, management, and present state of the Joint Stock Companies, which have been formed during the years 1824, 1825, and 1826; and to report the same, with any special matter touching the conduct of any members of this House."

MR. SECRETARY CANNING* assured the honourable alderman (Mr. Waithman), that if he announced his intention of moving an amendment to the motion before the House, it was not with any desire to obstruct the object which that proposition had in view, but rather to place it upon a more practicable footing than it stood at present. The honourable alderman had observed, but a few minutes since, to some friends who were suggesting something to him, "that he would be glad if they would let him alone, for he could do but one thing at a time." Now, he thought that principle so sound a one, that he wished it, if possible, to be acted upon throughout the transaction. Thinking that the honourable alderman had laid before Parliament a sufficient case to warrant one specific inquiry, to that inquiry he was perfectly ready to give his consent; but he wished that, to that one inquiry, in the first instance, the attention of the House should be confined. He did not mean, thereby, to preclude any further inquiry, if the House should afterwards think it right to enter into any: but, in the beginning, he was perfectly sure it would be better, on all accounts, to confine its attention to a single

object. And, with this view—the honourable alderman's motion being for a select committee to inquire into the origin and management of the joint stock companies which had been formed during the years 1824, 1825, and 1826, with power to report any special matter connected with the conduct of members of that House—he should propose, as an amendment, to leave out the words "companies formed during the years 1824, 1825, and 1826," and substitute in their place, "the Arigna Iron and Coal Mining Company." In suggesting the alteration, he might add, that neither he, nor those with whom he acted, felt the slightest disposition to screen from exposure any parties guilty of misconduct. If the purpose of the honourable alderman were practical good, he seemed disposed to launch on so wide an ocean, that even if he ever arrived at the end of his voyage of discovery, it would be prolonged to such a distant date, as to deprive the inquiry of its most material advantages. Now, he was desirous of steering for one point in the first instance, and afterwards, if it were found expedient, to proceed in quest of new adventures. As at present framed, it was impossible to agree to the motion, since its terms would include many joint stock companies, not in the contemplation even of the honourable alderman himself. Many persons of the most unimpeachable characters had embarked in speculations of this description, for the most irreproachable ends. Companies of rail-roads, piers, harbours, gas-lights, and many other laudable objects, had been established, during the years mentioned in the motion; and into these he presumed it was not intended to carry the investigation. He did not apprehend that the honourable alderman meant to cast any imputation upon the parties who had engaged in these useful speculations.

Mr. Alderman Waithman said, he had no such design in the motion he had submitted to the House.

Mr. Canning repeated, that at some future time he should not resist inquiry into the origin and management of other companies, if a case at all like that against the Arigna Company could be established in the first instance. Now, enough had passed in the matter of that company, to lead the House to a grave suspicion that there had been in the conduct of that company matter for inquiry. The allegations against it had been distinct. They had been urged with strong and decided epithets, by those who supported the accusation; and, on the part of the defence, there had been an admission of such conduct as it was necessary that the House should examine into. By the course which he took, he did not mean to prejudge the question as to any case; but he was bound to say that, with respect to the other companies which the honourable alderman had mentioned, he did not think that he had made out any such case as against the Arigna Company; or a sufficient case, indeed, to institute inquiry. But, whatever was done must be done by specific motions; because he was quite sure that, by going into the general inquiry, the honourable alderman would only merge his own object in a mass of impracticable details. For himself, he was perfectly ready to go into an inquiry upon the distinct charge against the Arigna Company now; and, afterwards, he should be just as willing to receive another charge against any other company, as to which the same degree of conviction in his mind that there had been mismanagement, should arise. But he could not consent to some of the propositions which had been relied on, in bringing forward the motion. He could not assent to the honourable gentleman's opinion, that this country was injured at home, and its character prejudiced in foreign countries, by these joint stock companies. He could not but say, that he thought some of our joint stock companies conferred honour, as well as advantage, on the country. Some

of our best and noblest institutions owed their origin to, and were supported by, joint stock associations. He had only to instance the Bank, and East India Company. He must dissent altogether from so much of the motion as went to inculpate, upon general and undefined charges, so large a number of distinguished and irreproachable individuals connected with them, and to consign them to unmerited reprobation. With respect to the names of the members whom the honourable alderman proposed to constitute the committee, a list of them had been put into his hands. Certainly they were very respectable; but, at the same time, he could not help remarking, that no less than fourteen, out of the seventeen, were of the honourable alderman's side in politics. The honourable alderman himself seemed to admit, that the greater number of sinners were on his own side of the House; and it was on that ground that he objected to so many names from that side; for it was not exactly right that so many sinners should be appointed to try sinners. It was his wish, that the committee should be impartially chosen; so that, on the one hand, there might be none upon it whose fellow-feelings might prompt them to screen guilt, or, on the other, whose indignation at these transactions might carry them beyond the boundaries of justice.

The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving his amendment, the effect of which was to restrict the inquiry of the committee into the origin, conduct, and management of the Arigna Mining Company.

The Amendment was agreed to.

THE KING'S MESSAGE.

DECEMBER 12th, 1826.

"GEORGE R.

"His Majesty acquaints the House of Commons that His Majesty has received an earnest application from the Princess Regent of Portugal, claiming, in virtue of the ancient obligations of alliance and amity between His Majesty and the Crown of Portugal, His Majesty's aid against an hostile aggression from Spain.

"His Majesty has exerted himself for some time past, in conjunction with His Majesty's ally, the King of France, to prevent such an aggression: and repeated assurances have been given by the Court of Madrid of the determination of His Catholic Majesty neither to commit, nor to allow to be committed from His Catholic Majesty's territory, any aggression against Portugal; but His Majesty has learned, with deep concern, that notwithstanding these assurances, hostile inroads into the territory of Portugal have been concerted in Spain, and have been executed under the eyes of Spanish authorities by Portuguese regiments, which had deserted into Spain, and which the Spanish Government had repeatedly and solemnly engaged to disarm and to disperse.

"His Majesty leaves no effort unexhausted to awaken the Spanish Government to the dangerous consequences of this apparent connivance.

"His Majesty makes this communication to the House of Commons with the full and entire confidence, that his faithful Commons will afford to His Majesty their cordial concurrence and support in maintaining the faith of treaties, and in securing against foreign hostility the safety and independence of the kingdom of Portugal, the oldest ally of Great Britain.

"G. R."

MR. SECRETARY CANNING moved the Order of the Day, for taking into consideration His Majesty's gracious Message.

The Message was then read.*

MR. SECRETARY CANNING.—Mr. Speaker,—In proposing to the House of Commons to acknowledge, by an humble and dutiful Address, His Majesty's most gracious message, and to reply to it in terms which will be, in effect, an echo of the sentiments, and a fulfilment of the anticipations of that message, I feel that, however confident I may be in the justice, and however clear as to the policy of the measures therein announced, it becomes me, as a British Minister, recommend-

* At the time of the publication of the corrected report of this speech, it was asserted that it differed materially from the speech, as originally spoken by Mr. Canning. The Editor of this work happens to have in his possession the original proof copy, submitted for correction, with Mr. Canning's alterations; and though it cannot be denied that many alterations were made in it, yet they are alterations rather of style and language than of sentiment. As a fair test by which to determine the accuracy of this observation, the Editor would refer to the *latter half* of the first speech of Mr. Canning on the affairs of Portugal, which Count Chateaubriand, in the French Chamber of Peers, quoted as the most objectionable passage in the speech. The report from which the noble Peer quoted it was that which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, in which journal the passage was reported by a gentleman who has brought the very useful accomplishment of short-hand writing to the utmost degree of perfection of which it is susceptible. On a comparison of this part of the speech in the original and corrected reports, there will not be found a single omission or alteration, except, as has been already remarked, an *alteration of style and language*.—EDITOR.

ing to Parliament any step which may approximate this country even to the hazard of a war, while I explain the grounds of that proposal, to accompany my explanation with expressions of regret.

I can assure the House, that there is not within its walls any set of men more deeply convinced than his Majesty's Ministers—nor any individual more intimately persuaded than he who has now the honour of addressing you—of the vital importance of the continuance of peace, to this country and to the world. So strongly am I impressed with this opinion—and for reasons of which I will put the House more fully in possession before I sit down—that, I declare, there is no question of doubtful or controverted policy—no opportunity of present national advantage—no precaution against remote difficulty—which I would not gladly compromise, pass over, or adjourn, rather than call on Parliament to sanction, at this moment, any measure which had a tendency to involve the country in war. But, at the same time, Sir, I feel that which has been felt, in the best times of English history, by the best statesmen of this country, and by the Parliaments by whom those statesmen were supported—I feel that there are two causes, and but two causes, which cannot be either compromised, passed over, or adjourned. These causes are, adherence to the national faith, and regard for the national honour.

Sir, if I did not consider both these causes as involved in the proposition which I have this day to make to you, I should not address the House, as I now do, in the full and entire confidence that the gracious communication of His Majesty will be met by the House with the concurrence of which His Majesty has declared his expectation.

In order to bring the matter which I have to submit to you under the cognizance of the House in the shortest and clearest manner, I beg leave to state it, in the first instance, divested of any collateral considerations. It is a case of law and of fact:—of national law on the one hand, and of notorious fact on the other; such as it must be, in my opinion, as impossible for Parliament as it was for the Government, to regard in any but one light; or to come to any but one conclusion upon it.

Among the alliances by which, at different periods of our history, this country has been connected with the other nations of Europe, none is so ancient in origin, and so precise in obligation—none has continued so long and been observed so faithfully—of none is the memory so intimately interwoven with the most brilliant records of our triumphs, as that by which Great Britain is connected with Portugal. It dates back to distant centuries; it has survived an endless variety of fortunes. Anterior in existence to the accession of the House of Braganza to the throne of Portugal—it derived, however, fresh vigour from that

event; and never, from that epoch to the present hour, has the independent monarchy of Portugal ceased to be nurtured by the friendship of Great Britain. This alliance has never been seriously interrupted: but it has been renewed by repeated sanctions. It has been maintained under difficulties by which the fidelity of other alliances was shaken, and has been vindicated in fields of blood and of glory.

That the alliance with Portugal has been always unqualifiedly advantageous to this country—that it has not been sometimes inconvenient and sometimes burdensome—I am not bound nor prepared to maintain. But no British statesman, so far as I know, has ever suggested the expediency of shaking it off: and it is assuredly not at a moment of need, that honour, and what I may be allowed to call national sympathy, would permit us to weigh, with an over-scrupulous exactness, the amount of difficulties and dangers attendant upon its faithful and steadfast observance. What feelings of national honour would forbid, is forbidden alike by the plain dictates of national faith.

It is not at distant periods of history, and in by-gone ages only, that the traces of the union between Great Britain and Portugal are to be found. In the last compact of modern Europe, the compact which forms the basis of its present international law—I mean the Treaty of Vienna of 1815—this country, with its eyes open to the possible inconveniences of the connection, but

with a memory awake to its past benefits—solemnly renewed the previously existing obligations of alliance and amity with Portugal. I will take leave to read to the House the third article of the Treaty concluded at Vienna in 1815, between Great Britain on the one hand, and Portugal on the other. It is couched in the following terms:—"The Treaty of Alliance concluded at Rio de Janeiro, on the 19th of February, 1810, being founded on circumstances of a temporary nature, which have happily ceased to exist, the said Treaty is hereby declared to be void in all its parts, and of no effect; *without prejudice, however, to the ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee, which have so long and so happily subsisted between the two Crowns, and which are hereby renewed by the high contracting parties, and acknowledged to be of full force and effect.*"

In order to appreciate the force of this stipulation,—recent in point of time, recent also in the sanction of Parliament,—the House will perhaps allow me to explain shortly the circumstances in reference to which it was contracted. In the year 1807, when, upon the declaration of Buonaparte, that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign, the King of Portugal, by the advice of Great Britain, was induced to set sail for the Brazils; almost at the very moment of His Most Faithful Majesty's embarkation, a secret convention was signed between His Majesty and the

King of Portugal, stipulating that, in the event of His Most Faithful Majesty's establishing the seat of his Government in Brazil, Great Britain would never acknowledge any other dynasty than that of the House of Braganza on the throne of Portugal. That convention, I say, was contemporaneous with the migration to the Brazils; a step of great importance at the time, as removing from the grasp of Buonaparte the sovereign family of Braganza. Afterwards, in the year 1810, when the seat of the King of Portugal's Government was established at Rio de Janeiro, and when it seemed probable, in the then apparently hopeless condition of the affairs of Europe, that it was likely long to continue there, the secret convention of 1807, of which the main object was accomplished by the fact of the emigration to Brazil, was abrogated, and a new and public treaty was concluded, into which was transferred the stipulation of the convention of 1807, binding Great Britain, so long as His Faithful Majesty should be compelled to reside in Brazil, not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza. That stipulation which had hitherto been *secret*, thus became *patent*, and part of the known law of nations.

In the year 1814, in consequence of the happy conclusion of the war, the option was afforded to the King of Portugal of returning to his European dominions. It was then felt that, as the necessity

of His Most Faithful Majesty's absence from Portugal had ceased, the ground of the obligation originally contracted in the secret convention of 1807, and afterwards transferred to the patent Treaty of 1810, was removed. The Treaty of 1810 was therefore annulled at the Congress of Vienna; and in lieu of the stipulation not to acknowledge any other sovereign of Portugal than a member of the House of Braganza, was substituted that which I have just read to the House.

Annulling the Treaty of 1810, the Treaty of Vienna renews and confirms, (as the House will have seen), all *former* treaties between Great Britain and Portugal, describing them as "ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee;" as having "long and happily subsisted between the two crowns;" and as being allowed, by the two high contracting parties, to remain "in full force and effect."

What then is the force—what is the effect of those ancient treaties? I am prepared to show to the House what it is. But before I do so, I must say, that if all the treaties to which this article of the Treaty of Vienna refers had perished by some convulsion of nature, or had by some extraordinary accident been consigned to total oblivion, still it would be impossible not to admit, as an incontestible inference from this article of the Treaty of Vienna alone, that in a moral point of view, there is incumbent on Great Britain,

a decided obligation to act as the effectual defender of Portugal. If I could not show the letter of a single antecedent stipulation, I should still contend that a solemn admission, only ten years old, of the existence at that time of "treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee," held Great Britain to the discharge of the obligations which that very description implies. But fortunately there is no such difficulty in specifying the nature of those obligations. All the preceding treaties exist—all of them are of easy reference—all of them are known to this country, to Spain, to every nation of the civilized world. They are so numerous, and their general result is so uniform, that it may be sufficient to select only two of them to show the nature of all.

The first to which I shall advert is the Treaty of 1661, which was concluded at the time of the marriage of Charles the Second with the Infanta of Portugal. After reciting the marriage, and making over to Great Britain, in consequence of that marriage, first, a considerable sum of money, and secondly, several important places, some of which, as Tangier, we no longer possess; but others of which, as Bombay, still belong to this country, the Treaty runs thus:—"In consideration of all which grants, so much to the benefit of the King of Great Britain and his subjects in general, and of the delivery of those important places to his said Majesty and his heirs for ever,

&c. the King of Great Britain does profess and declare, with the consent and advice of his Council, that he will take the interest of Portugal and all its dominions to heart, defending the same with his utmost power by sea and land, *even as England itself*;" and it then proceeds to specify the succours to be sent, and the manner of sending them.

I come next to the Treaty of 1703, a treaty of alliance contemporaneous with the Methuen Treaty, which has regulated, for upwards of a century, the commercial relations of the two countries. The Treaty of 1703 was a tripartite engagement between the States-General of Holland, England, and Portugal. The second article of that Treaty sets forth, that "If ever it shall happen that the Kings of Spain and France, either the present or the future, that both of them together, or either of them separately, shall make war, or give occasion to suspect that they intend to make war upon the kingdom of Portugal, either on the continent of Europe, or on its dominions beyond seas; Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, and the Lords the States-General shall use their friendly offices with the said Kings, or either of them, in order to persuade them to observe the terms of peace towards Portugal, and not to make war upon it." The third article declares, that in the event of these "good offices not proving successful, but altogether ineffectual,

so that war should be made by the aforesaid kings, or by either of them upon Portugal, the above-mentioned powers of Great Britain and Holland shall make war with all their force upon the aforesaid Kings or King who shall carry hostile arms into Portugal; and towards that war which shall be carried on in Europe, they shall supply 12,000 men, whom they shall arm and pay, as well when in quarters as in action; and the said high allies shall be obliged to keep that number of men complete, by recruiting it from time to time at their own expence."

I am aware, indeed, that with respect to either of the treaties which I have quoted, it is possible to raise a question—whether, variation of circumstances or change of times may not have somewhat relaxed its obligations. The Treaty of 1661, it might be said, was so loose and prodigal in the wording—it is so unreasonable, so wholly out of nature, that any one country should be expected to defend another, "*even as itself*;" such stipulations are of so exaggerated a character as to resemble effusions of feeling, rather than enunciations of deliberate compact. Again, with respect to the Treaty of 1703, if the case rested on that treaty alone, a question might be raised, whether or not, when one of the contracting parties—Holland—had since so changed her relations with Portugal, as to consider her obligations under the Treaty of 1703 as obsolete—whether or not, I say,

under such circumstances, the obligation on the remaining party be not likewise void. I should not hesitate to answer both these objections in the negative. But without entering into such a controversy, it is sufficient for me to say, that the time and place for taking such objections, was at the Congress at Vienna. Then and there it was, that if you indeed considered these treaties as obsolete, you ought frankly and fearlessly to have declared them to be so. But then and there, with your eyes open, and in the face of all modern Europe, you proclaimed anew the ancient treaties of alliance, friendship, and guarantee, "so long subsisting between the crowns of Great Britain and Portugal," as still "acknowledged by Great Britain," and still "of full force and effect." It is not, however, on specific articles alone—it is not so much, perhaps, on either of these ancient treaties, taken separately, as it is on the spirit and understanding of the whole body of treaties, of which the essence is concentrated and preserved in the Treaty of Vienna, that we acknowledge in Portugal a right to look to Great Britain as her ally and defender.

This, Sir, being the state, morally and politically, of our obligations towards Portugal, it is obvious that when Portugal, in apprehension of the coming storm, called on Great Britain for assistance, the only hesitation on our part could be—not whether that assistance was due, sup-

posing the occasion for demanding it to arise, but simply, whether that occasion—in other words, whether the *casus fœderis* had arisen.

I understand, indeed, that in some quarters, it has been imputed to His Majesty's Ministers, that an extraordinary delay intervened between the taking of the determination to give assistance to Portugal, and the carrying of that determination into effect. But how stands the fact? On Sunday, the 3d of this month, we received from the Portuguese Ambassador a direct and formal demand of assistance against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was—that although rumours had reached us through France, His Majesty's Government had not that accurate information—that official and precise intelligence of facts—on which they could properly found an application to Parliament. It was only on last Friday night that this precise information arrived. On Saturday His Majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday that decision received the sanction of His Majesty. On Monday it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament—and this day, Sir—at the hour in which I have the honour of addressing you—the troops are on their march for embarkation.

I trust, then, Sir, that no unseemly delay is imputable to Government. But, undoubtedly, on the other hand, when the claim of Portugal for assistance—a claim, clear indeed in justice, but

at the same time fearfully spreading in its possible consequences, came before us, it was the duty of His Majesty's Government to do nothing on hearsay. The eventual force of the claim was admitted; but a thorough knowledge of facts was necessary before the compliance with that claim could be granted. The Government here laboured under some disadvantage. The rumours which reached us through Madrid were obviously distorted, to answer partial political purposes; and the intelligence through the press of France, though substantially correct, was, in particulars, vague and contradictory. A measure of grave and serious moment could never be founded on such authority; nor could the Ministers come down to Parliament until they had a confident assurance that the case which they had to lay before the Legislature was true in all its parts.

But there was another reason which induced a necessary caution. In former instances, when Portugal applied to this country for assistance, the whole power of the state in Portugal was vested in the person of the monarch. The expression of his wish, the manifestation of his desire, the putting forth of his claim, was sufficient ground for immediate and decisive action on the part of Great Britain, supposing the *casus fœderis* to be made out. But, on this occasion, inquiry was in the first place to be made whether, according to the new Constitution of Portugal,

the call upon Great Britain was made with the consent of all the powers and authorities competent to make it, so as to carry with it an assurance of that reception in Portugal for our army, which the army of a friend and ally had a right to expect. Before a British soldier should put his foot on Portuguese ground, nay, before he should leave the shores of England, it was our duty to ascertain that the step taken by the Regency of Portugal was taken with the cordial concurrence of the Legislature of that country. It was but this morning that we received intelligence of the proceedings of the Chambers at Lisbon, which establishes the fact of such concurrence. This intelligence is contained in a despatch from Sir W. A'Court, dated 29th of November, of which I will read an extract to the House. "The day after the news arrived of the entry of the rebels into Portugal, the Ministers demanded from the Chambers an extension of power for the Executive Government; and the permission to apply for foreign succours, in virtue of ancient treaties, in the event of their being deemed necessary. The Deputies gave the requisite authority by acclamation; and an equally good spirit was manifested by the peers, who granted every power that the Ministers could possibly require. They went even further, and rising in a body from their seats, declared their devotion to their country, and their readiness to give their

personal services, if necessary, to repel any hostile invasion. The Duke de Cadaval, President of the Chamber, was the first to make this declaration: and the Minister who described this proceeding to me, said, it was a movement worthy of the good days of Portugal!"

I have thus incidentally disposed of the supposed imputation of delay in complying with the requisition of the Portuguese Government. The main question, however, is this—Was it obligatory upon us to comply with that requisition? In other words, had the *casus fœderis* arisen? In our opinion it had. Bands of Portuguese rebels, armed, equipped, and trained in Spain, had crossed the Spanish frontier, carrying terror and devastation into their own country, and proclaiming sometimes the brother of the reigning sovereign of Portugal, sometimes a Spanish Princess, and sometimes even Ferdinand of Spain, as the rightful occupant of the Portuguese throne. These rebels crossed the frontier, not at one point only, but at several points: for it is remarkable that the aggression, on which the original application to Great Britain for succour was founded, is not the aggression with reference to which that application has been complied with.

The attack announced by the French newspapers was on the north of Portugal, in the province of Tras-os-Montes; an official account of which has been received by His Majesty's Govern-

ment only this day. But on Friday an account was received of an invasion in the south of Portugal, and of the capture of Villa Viciosa, a town lying on the road from the southern frontier to Lisbon. This new fact established even more satisfactorily than a mere confirmation of the attack first complained of would have done, the systematic nature of the aggression from Spain against Portugal. One hostile irruption might have been made by some single corps escaping from their quarters, — by some body of stragglers, who might have evaded the vigilance of Spanish authorities; and one such accidental and unconnected act of violence might not have been conclusive evidence of cognizance and design on the part of those authorities; but when a series of attacks are made along the whole line of a frontier, it is difficult to deny that such multiplied instances of hostility are evidence of concerted aggression.

If a single company of *Spanish* soldiers had crossed the frontier in hostile array, there could not, it is presumed, be a doubt as to the character of that invasion. Shall bodies of men, armed, clothed, and regimented by Spain, carry fire and sword into the bosom of her unoffending neighbour, and shall it be pretended that no attack, no invasion has taken place, because, forsooth, these outrages are committed against Portugal by men to whom Portugal had given birth and nurture?

What petty quibbling would it be to say, that an invasion of Portugal from Spain was not a *Spanish* invasion, because Spain did not employ her own troops, but hired mercenaries to effect her purpose? And what difference is it, except as aggravation, that the mercenaries in this instance were natives of Portugal?

I have already stated, and I now repeat, that it never has been the wish or the pretension of the British Government to interfere in the internal concerns of the Portuguese nation. Questions of that kind the Portuguese nation must settle among themselves. But if we were to admit that hordes of traitorous refugees from Portugal, with Spanish arms—or arms furnished or restored to them by Spanish authorities—in their hands, might put off their country for one purpose, and put it on again for another—put it off for the purpose of attack, and put it on again for the purpose of impunity—if, I say, we were to admit this juggle, and either pretend to be deceived by it ourselves, or attempt to deceive Portugal, into a belief that there was nothing of external attack, nothing of foreign hostility, in such a system of aggression—such pretence and attempt would perhaps be only ridiculous and contemptible; if they did not require a much more serious character from being employed as an excuse for infidelity to ancient friendship, and

as a pretext for getting rid of the positive stipulations of treaties.

This, then, is the case which I lay before the House of Commons. Here is, on the one hand, an undoubted pledge of national faith—not taken in a corner—not kept secret between the parties—but publicly recorded amongst the annals of history, in the face of the world. Here are, on the other hand, undeniable acts of foreign aggression, perpetrated, indeed, principally through the instrumentality of domestic traitors; but supported with foreign means, instigated by foreign councils, and directed to foreign ends. Putting these facts and this pledge together, it is impossible that His Majesty should refuse the call that has been made upon him; nor can Parliament, I am convinced, refuse to enable His Majesty to fulfil his undoubted obligations. I am willing to rest the whole question of to-night, and to call for the vote of the House of Commons upon this simple case, divested altogether of collateral circumstances; from which I especially wish to separate it, in the minds of those who hear me, and also in the minds of others, to whom what I now say will find its way. If I were to sit down this moment, without adding another word, I have no doubt but that I should have the concurrence of the House in the Address which I mean to propose.

When I state this, it will be obvious to the House, that the vote for which I am about to call upon them, is a vote for the defence of Portugal, not a vote for war against Spain. I beg the House to keep these two points entirely distinct in their consideration. For the former I think I have said enough. If, in what I have now farther to say, I should bear hard upon the Spanish Government, I beg that it may be observed, that, unjustifiable as I shall show their conduct to have been—contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the law of good neighbourhood, contrary, I might say, to the laws of God and man—with respect to Portugal—still I do not mean to preclude a *locus pœnitentiæ*, a possibility of redress and reparation. It is our duty to fly to the defence of Portugal—be the assailant who he may. And, be it remembered, that, in thus fulfilling the stipulations of ancient treaties, of the existence and obligation of which all the world are aware, we, according to the universally admitted construction of the law of nations, neither make war upon that assailant, nor give to that assailant, much less to any other power, just cause of war against ourselves.

Sir, the present situation of Portugal is so anomalous, and the recent years of her history are crowded with events so unusual, that the House will, perhaps, not think that I am unprofitably wasting its time, if I take the liberty of calling its attention shortly and succinctly to

those events, and to their influence on the political relations of Europe. It is known that the consequence of the residence of the King of Portugal in Brazil, was to raise the latter country from a colonial to a mettopolitan condition; and that from the time when the King began to contemplate his return to Portugal, there grew up in Brazil a desire of independence that threatened dissension, if not something like civil contest, between the European and American dominions of the House of Braganza. It is known also that Great Britain undertook a mediation between Portugal and Brazil, and induced the King to consent to a separation of the two Crowns—confirming that of Brazil on the head of his eldest son. The ink with which this agreement was written was scarcely dry, when the unexpected death of the King of Portugal produced a new state of things, which re-united on the same head the two Crowns which it had been the policy of England, as well as of Portugal and of Brazil to separate. On that occasion, Great Britain, and another European Court closely connected with Brazil, tendered advice to the Emperor of Brazil, now become King of Portugal, which advice it cannot be accurately said that His Imperial Majesty followed, because he had decided for himself before it reached Rio de Janeiro; but in conformity with which advice, though not in consequence of it, His Imperial Majesty determined

to abdicate the Crown of Portugal in favour of his eldest daughter. But the Emperor of Brazil had done more. What had not been foreseen—what would have been beyond the province of any foreign power to advise—His Imperial Majesty had accompanied his abdication of the Crown of Portugal with the grant of a free constitutional charter to that kingdom.

It has been surmised that this measure, as well as the abdication which it accompanied, was the offspring of our advice. No such thing—Great Britain did not suggest this measure. It is not her duty nor her practice to offer suggestions for the internal regulation of foreign states. She neither approved nor disapproved of the grant of a constitutional charter to Portugal: her opinion upon that grant was never required. True it is, that the instrument of the constitutional charter was brought to Europe by a gentleman of high trust in the service of the British Government. Sir C. Stuart had gone to Brazil to negociate the separation between that country and Portugal. In addition to his character of Plenipotentiary of Great Britain, as the mediating power, he had also been invested by the King of Portugal with the character of His Most Faithful Majesty's Plenipotentiary for the negociation with Brazil. That negociation had been brought to a happy conclusion; and therewith the British part of Sir C. Stuart's commission had terminated. But

Sir C. Stuart was still resident at Rio de Janeiro, as the Plenipotentiary of the King of Portugal, for negociating commercial arrangements between Portugal and Brazil. In this latter character it was, that Sir C. Stuart, on his return to Europe, was requested by the Emperor of Brazil to be the bearer to Portugal of the new constitutional charter. His Majesty's Government found no fault with Sir C. Stuart for executing this commission: but it was immediately felt, that if Sir C. Stuart were allowed to remain at Lisbon, it might appear, in the eyes of Europe, that England was the contriver and imposer of the Portuguese Constitution. Sir C. Stuart was, therefore, directed to return home forthwith: in order that the Constitution, if carried into effect there, might plainly appear to be adopted by the Portuguese nation itself, not forced upon them by English interference.

As to the merits, Sir, of the new Constitution of Portugal, I have neither the intention, nor the right, to offer any opinion. Personally, I may have formed one; but as an English Minister, all I have to say is,—"May God prosper this attempt at the establishmnt of constitutional liberty in Portugal! and may that nation be found as fit to enjoy and to cherish its new-born privileges, as it has often proved itself capable of discharging its duties amongst the nations of the world!"

I, Sir, am neither the champion nor the critic

of the Portuguese Constitution. But it is admitted on all hands to have proceeded from a legitimate source—a consideration which has mainly reconciled continental Europe to its establishment: and to us, as Englishmen, it is recommended, by the ready acceptance which it has met with from all orders of the Portuguese people. To that Constitution, therefore, thus unquestioned in its origin, even by those who are most jealous of new institutions—to that Constitution, thus sanctioned in its outset by the glad and grateful acclamations of those who are destined to live under it—to that Constitution, founded on principles in a great degree similar to those of our own, though differently modified—it is impossible that Englishmen should not wish well. But it would not be for us to force that Constitution on the people of Portugal, if they were unwilling to receive it, or if any schism should exist amongst the Portuguese themselves, as to its fitness and congeniality to the wants and wishes of the nation. It is no business of ours to fight its battles. We go to Portugal in the discharge of a sacred obligation, contracted under ancient and modern treaties. When there, nothing shall be done by us to enforce the establishment of the Constitution;—but we must take care that nothing shall be done by others to prevent it from being fairly carried into effect. Internally, let the Portuguese settle their own affairs; but with respect to

external force, while Great Britain has an arm to raise, it must be raised against the efforts of any power that should attempt forcibly to controul the choice, and fetter the independence of Portugal.

Has such been the intention of Spain? Whether the proceedings which have lately been practised or permitted in Spain, were acts of a Government exercising the usual power of prudence and foresight, (without which, a Government is, for the good of the people which live under it, no Government at all), or whether they were the acts of some secret illegitimate power—of some furious fanatical faction, over-riding the counsels of the ostensible Government, defying it in the capital, and disobeying it on the frontiers—I will not stop to inquire. It is indifferent to Portugal, smarting under her wrongs—it is indifferent to England, who is called upon to avenge them—whether the present state of things be the result of the intrigues of a faction, over which, if the Spanish Government has no control, it ought to assume one as soon as possible—or of local authorities, over whom it has control, and for whose acts it must, therefore, be held responsible. It matters not, I say, from which of these sources the evil has arisen. In either case, Portugal must be protected; and from England that protection is due.

It would be unjust, however, to the Spanish

Government, to say, that it is only amongst the members of that Government that an unconquerable hatred of liberal institutions exists in Spain. However incredible the phenomenon may appear in this country, I am persuaded that a vast majority of the Spanish nation entertain a decided attachment to arbitrary power, and a predilection for absolute government. The more liberal institutions of countries in their neighbourhood have not yet extended their influence into Spain, nor awakened any sympathy in the mass of the Spanish people. Whether the public authorities of Spain did or did not partake of the national sentiment, there would almost necessarily grow up between Portugal and Spain, under present circumstances, an opposition of feelings, which it would not require the authority or the suggestions of the Government to excite and stimulate into action. Without blame, therefore, to the Government of Spain,—out of the natural antipathy between the two neighbouring nations—the one prizing its recent freedom, the other hugging its traditionary servitude—there might arise mutual provocations, and reciprocal injuries which, perhaps, even the most active and vigilant ministry could not altogether restrain. I am inclined to believe that such has been, in part at least, the origin of the differences between Spain and Portugal. That in their progress they have been adopted, matured, methodized, combined, and brought into more

perfect action, by some authority more united and more efficient than the mere feeling disseminated through the mass of the community, is certain; but I do believe their origin to have been as much in the real sentiment of the Spanish population, as in the opinion or contrivance of the Government itself.

Whether this be or be not the case, is precisely the question between us and Spain. If, though partaking in the general feelings of the Spanish nation, the Spanish Government has, nevertheless, done nothing to embody those feelings, and to direct them hostilely against Portugal; if all that has occurred on the frontiers, has occurred only because the vigilance of the Spanish Government has been surprised, its confidence betrayed, and its orders neglected—if its engagements have been repeatedly and shamefully violated, not by its own good will, but against its recommendation and desire—let us see some symptoms of disapprobation, some signs of repentance, some measures indicative of sorrow for the past, and of sincerity for the future. In that case, His Majesty's Message, to which I propose this night to return an answer of concurrence, will retain the character which I have ascribed to it,—that of a measure of defence for Portugal, not a measure of resentment against Spain.

With these explanations and qualifications, let us now proceed to the review of facts. Great de-

sertions took place from the Portuguese army into Spain, and some desertions took place from the Spanish army into Portugal. In the first instance, the Portuguese authorities were taken by surprise; but, in every subsequent instance, where they had an opportunity of exercising a discretion, it is but just to say, that they uniformly discouraged the desertions of the Spanish soldiery.—There exist between Spain and Portugal specific treaties, stipulating the mutual surrender of deserters. Portugal had, therefore, a right to claim of Spain that every Portuguese deserter should be forthwith sent back. I hardly know whether from its own impulse, or in consequence of our advice, the Portuguese Government waved its right under those treaties; very wisely reflecting, that it would be highly inconvenient to be placed by the return of their deserters, in the difficult alternative of either granting a dangerous amnesty, or ordering numerous executions. The Portuguese Government, therefore, signified to Spain that it would be entirely satisfied if, instead of surrendering the deserters, Spain would restore their arms, horses, and equipments; and, separating the men from their officers, would remove both from the frontiers into the interior of Spain. Solemn engagements were entered into by the Spanish Government to this effect—first with Portugal, next with France, and afterwards with England. Those engagements, concluded one

day, were violated the next. The deserters, instead of being disarmed and dispersed, were allowed to remain congregated together near the frontiers of Portugal; where they were enrolled, trained, and disciplined, for the expedition which they have since undertaken. It is plain that in these proceedings, there was perfidy somewhere. It rests with the Spanish Government to show, that it was not with them. It rests with the Spanish Government to prove, that if its engagements have not been fulfilled—if its intentions have been eluded and unexecuted, the fault has not been with the Government; and that it is ready to make every reparation in its power.

I have said that these promises were made to France and to Great Britain, as well as to Portugal. I should do a great injustice to France if I were not to add, that the representations of that Government upon this point with the Cabinet of Madrid, have been as urgent, and, alas! as fruitless, as those of Great Britain. Upon the first irruption into the Portuguese territory, the French Government testified its displeasure by instantly recalling its Ambassador; and it further directed its Chargé d'Affaires to signify to His Catholic Majesty, that Spain was not to look for any support from France against the consequences of this aggression upon Portugal. I am bound, I repeat, in justice to the French Government, to state, that it has exerted itself to the utmost, in urging

Spain to retrace the steps which she has so unfortunately taken. It is not for me to say whether any more efficient course might have been adopted to give effect to their exhortations: but as to the sincerity and good faith of the exertions made by the Government of France, to press Spain to the execution of her engagements, I have not the shadow of a doubt:—and I confidently reckon upon their continuance.

It will be for Spain, upon knowledge of the step now taken by His Majesty, to consider in what way she will meet it. The earnest hope and wish of His Majesty's Government is, that she may meet it in such a manner as to avert any ill consequences to herself, from the measure into which we have been driven by the unjust attack upon Portugal.

Sir, I set out with saying, that there were reasons which entirely satisfied my judgment that nothing short of a point of national faith or national honour, would justify at the present moment, any voluntary approximation to the possibility of war. Let me be understood, however, distinctly, as not meaning to say that I dread war in a good cause, (and in no other may it be the lot of this country ever to engage!) from a distrust of the strength of the country to commence it, or of her resources to maintain it. I dread it, indeed—but upon far other grounds: I dread it from an apprehension of the tremendous consequences which

might arise from any hostilities in which we might now be engaged. Some years ago, in the discussion of the negociations respecting the French war against Spain, I took the liberty of adverting to this topic. I then stated that the position of this country in the present state of the world, was one of neutrality, not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles; and that it was by neutrality alone that we could maintain that balance, the preservation of which, I believed to be essential to the welfare of mankind. I then said, that I feared that the next war which should be kindled in Europe, would be a war not so much of armies, as of opinions. Not four years have elapsed, and behold my apprehension realised! It is, to be sure, within narrow limits that this war of opinion is at present confined: but it *is* a war of opinion, that Spain, (whether as Government or as nation) is now waging against Portugal; it is a war which has commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal. How long is it reasonable to expect that Portugal will abstain from retaliation? If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it, with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate—and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country, (however earnestly she may endeavour to avoid it), could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked

under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come in conflict. It is the contemplation of this new *power* in any future war, which excites my most anxious apprehension. It is one thing to have a giant's strength, but it would be another to use it like a giant. The consciousness of such strength is, undoubtedly, a source of confidence and security; but in the situation in which this country stands, our business is not to seek opportunities of displaying it, but to content ourselves with letting the professors of violent and exaggerated doctrines on both sides feel, that it is not their interest to convert an umpire into an adversary. The situation of England, amidst the struggle of political opinions which agitates more or less sensibly different countries of the world, may be compared to that of the Ruler of the Winds, as described by the poet:—

—— "Celsâ sedet Æolus arce,
Sceptra tenens; mollitque animos et temperat iras;
Ni faciat, maria ac terras cœlumque profundum
Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras."

The consequence of letting loose the passions at present chained and confined, would be to produce a scene of desolation which no man can contemplate without horror; and I should not sleep easy on my couch, if I were conscious that

I had contributed to precipitate it by a single moment.

This, then, is the reason—a reason very different from fear—the reverse of a consciousness of disability—why I dread the recurrence of hostilities in any part of Europe; why I would bear much, and would forbear long; why I would (as I have said) put up with almost any thing that did not touch national faith and national honour; —rather than let slip the furies of war, the leash of which we hold in our hands—not knowing whom they may reach, or how far their ravages may be carried. Such is the love of peace which the British Government acknowledges; and such the necessity for peace which the circumstances of the world inculcate. I will push these topics no farther.

I return, in conclusion, to the object of the Address. Let us fly to the aid of Portugal, by whomsoever attacked; because it is our duty to do so: and let us cease our interference where that duty ends. We go to Portugal, not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions—but to defend and to preserve the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well-known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come.

The SPEAKER read the Address, which was received

with much applause, and put the question that it be adopted.

Sir Robert Wilson—No man was more fully persuaded than himself, that, on an occasion like the present, His Majesty was actuated by the just pride of a British King, conscious that he was ruling a people who esteemed the maintenance of good faith and national honour the brightest gem of his crown. As, however, the King could only act by his confidential advisers, he (Sir R. W.) felt great anxiety upon this subject, and, knowing, as he did, the unexampled treachery and continued aggressions by Spain upon Portugal, he had been unable to controul his impatience, and had, therefore, given notice of a motion, the chief object of which was to obtain information. After the statement of to-night, proving at once the vigour, decision, and energy of Ministers, his anxiety only was, to see them carry their own purposes into execution, and thus save him the pain of an accusatory attack. At the same time, he thought Great Britain was bound to require of France that she should march her troops out of Spain, as a first step to the defence of Portugal. She had entered Spain merely to release the King, and to restore peace, and that object had long ago been accomplished.

Mr. Hume opposed the Address, principally on the ground that this country was not in a situation to enter upon, and long maintain a war on a great scale. He further contended, that war should not be entered into, unless a strong case of necessity was made out. He had the admission of the right honourable gentleman for saying this, and it was highly inconsistent in him, who was the advocate of this doctrine in 1823, to precipitate the country into a war now, without either affording sufficient time for deliberation, or establishing a case of unavoidable necessity to enter into it. The

honourable member moved an amendment, "that the House be called over this day week."

Mr. Wood, (of Preston,) seconded the amendment.

Mr. Baring observed, that when the possibility of our being soon engaged in a war came to be considered, he had much dreaded the hazard of being plunged into a war on one day, which the country might have to lament on another; and he had been most anxious that some means of evasion could have been found out, by which war might have been avoided. But, such a very strong case had been made out, that he was not surprised at the approbation with which the proposition of this night had been almost unanimously received. He asked what great nation had ever accomplished any valuable purpose by an over submissive and pusillanimous policy? They need not talk to him about a property tax, and bank restriction acts. The question was, whether our faith was bound? and if it was, then we must fulfil our obligations. If the House had the baseness to declare itself broken-hearted, and afraid of war, sure he was that such a resolution would be disgusting and revolting to the feelings of the country. But still he confessed he could not understand how we could fully discharge our duty to Portugal, and yet avoid committing aggressions on Spain. Suppose Government were to send out Mina with a train of artillery, would not that be an aggression on Spain? In addition to the general question, as one of public faith, there was another consideration important to this country. No doubt we were bound to Portugal by solemn engagements, from which, whether burthensome or not, it was impossible for us at this moment to release ourselves. But, if we were not, it would not the less be a great essential paramount act of policy on the part of this country to maintain and uphold the independence of Portugal. He

had viewed, with the greatest possible jealousy and disgust, the state in which the Peninsula had been during the last four years. He could not help regretting that Government had looked so passively on the invasion of Spain in 1823. If, at that time, the same resolution had been shown in the case of Spain, as was at this time in the case of Portugal, Europe would have been saved from that calamity, into which, at some time or other, he firmly believed that invasion would draw it. The French Minister, it appeared, had left Madrid; all the forms had been duly gone through; the only question was, the sincerity of the French Government. He suspected there was a party behind, whether French or Russian, he knew not, telling the Spanish party, "Never mind what we say, we are really your friends and will back you." Whether France was sincere or not, it was the duty of the British Government to take the course that good faith marked out to it. The resources of the country had been alluded to; but that was a question which, on such an occasion as this, could never be raised while the country remained a power worth speaking of. When a case was fairly made out, involving our honour, it was impossible to suffer any consideration to be put in competition with it. But he could not view the possession of Spain by France, continued year after year, without feeling that it was extremely dangerous to this country. Spain was evidently just as far from getting rid of her subjection to France, as she was the first year of her occupation. If, then, this country suffered the invasion of Portugal, the whole coast of the Peninsula would fall under the influence of France; and thus Portugal, through Spain, and Spain, through France, would be under subjection to that power from which England had the most dread. The friendly disposition of any country was but a bad security for the national interests of this. We had the assurance of France

that that power would remain at peace; but that was what he would not be satisfied with. Could he trust to the family of Bourbon to refrain from effecting that which had constituted the highest object of the ambition of Louis XIV., and afterwards of Napoleon, and which at this time seemed almost secured to them by accident, perhaps, but he believed also in some degree by design? To what degree the war, once commenced, might spread, in point of expense and extent, there was no saying beforehand. He did not apprehend it would be of any very enormous description; and when the House bore in mind the taxes repealed since the conclusion of the war, he denied that the pressure at this time could be such as to render us incapable of bearing the burthens war would bring upon us. The right honourable gentleman, he was satisfied, had taken the only course that was open to him.

Mr. Bankes, senior, was of opinion that the House should be assured that *the war was quite indispensable*, before they rushed into it. Not all the eloquence of the right honourable Secretary had satisfied him *that that was the case*. The disturbances in Portugal were of a political character, and connected with its internal arrangements. He did not shrink from war because he despaired of the resources of the country, and, therefore, he would not support the amendment, but neither could he vote for the original motion.

Mr. Brougham supported the Address in an eloquent and impressive speech. Adverting to the ground on which the amendment was principally supported, he said, "The honourable members (Messrs. Hume and Wood) must recollect, and the House and the country must bear in mind, that the question is not at present whether, even at the expence of your character for good faith, you will consent to bear hereafter among mankind a stained reputation,

a forfeited honour. The question is not whether you will do so, and by so doing avert a war. I should say no, even if this choice were within your reach; but the question is, whether, for a little season of miserable, insecure, precarious, dishonourable, unbearable truce—I cannot call it peace, for it has nothing of the honour and the comfort which make the name of peace proverbially sweet—I say, the question is, whether for this wretched, precarious, disgusting, and intolerable postponement of hostilities, you will be content hereafter to have recourse to war, when war can no longer be avoided, and when its horrors will fall upon you—degraded and ruined in character in the eyes of all the nations of Europe, and, what is ten thousand times worse, degraded and ruined in your own. I say, Sir, degraded and ruined in reputation, and what may appear worse to those to whose minds such topics do not find so easy an access, the war will fall with tenfold weight upon our resources; for a small sum spent now in due time, may be the means of saving us an expenditure of ten times that amount, with interest—aye, and compound interest accumulated upon it. The risking of a thousand men, dreadful as that alternative is, may prevent the renewal of the horrors of war on a more extended scale; it may avert a war in which we may have to engage hereafter with crippled resources—a war of boundless expenditure, in which other powers, as well as Spain, may be prepared to take a part; a war, of which it may indeed be said, that when it is once begun no man can pretend to prescribe its limits. I entirely agree in all that has been said of the hazards and difficulties inseparable from war, and I was certainly one of those who held, some years ago, that looking to the burthens under which this country laboured, we were under severe recognizances to keep the peace. I know the severity of these burthens; but if I feel their weight—if I

feel apprehensive (as who must not?) of their effect, in case this most necessary measure—a measure which, upon all reasonable probabilities, must prove effectual—should unhappily fail, I cannot but rely on those sound, enlightened, liberal, and truly English principles—principles worthy of our best times, and of our most distinguished statesmen, which now govern the councils of this country in her foreign policy, and inspire the eloquence of the right honourable Secretary with a degree of fervour, energy, and effect, extraordinary and unprecedented in this House—unprecedented (I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman. I feel that in these principles, now adopted and avowed by the organs of our Government, we have a strong and impregnable bulwark, which will enable us not only to support our burthens, and, should the day of trial come upon us, to meet the combined world in arms, but which will afford the strongest practical security against future danger, and render it eminently improbable that we shall ever have that combined world to contend with, so long as those principles are maintained. Our burthens may remain, but our Government know that when the voice of the people is in their favour, they have a lever, if not within their hands, within their grasp. I will imitate the discretion of the Secretary, and go no further. We know, because we have experienced, the extent of that power; our enemies that would be, but who, on this account, will not be so, know it, because they see its effect here, and dread its effect among themselves. If, however, that catastrophe, which His Majesty's Ministers have taken the best means to avert, and which, in all human probability, will be averted, should unhappily fall upon us, whatever may be our burthens, whatever may be the difficulties with which we may have to contend, let but His Majesty's Government act steadily

up to the principles they have avowed, and let the country but remain true to itself, and I have no fear of the rest.

Mr. Bright contended that no act of aggression against Portugal had been avowed by Spain, and that consequently no *casus fœderis* existed, and we were not bound by the terms of the treaty to embark in hostilities. The occupation of Portugal by 5,000 men would amount to nothing more than an armed neutrality. Now, by the terms of the treaty, we were only bound to assist Portugal in the event of actual hostilities having been commenced, and *then* we were bound to attack Spain with all our might.

MR. CANNING'S REPLY.

I rise, Sir, for the purpose of making a few observations, not so much in answer to any general arguments, as in reply to two or three particular objections which have been urged against the Address which I have had the honour to propose to the House.

In the first place, I frankly admit to my honourable friend (Mr. Bankes), the member for Dorsetshire, that I have understated the case against Spain—I have done so designedly—I warned the House that I would do so—because I wished no further to impeach the conduct of Spain, than was necessary for establishing the *casus fœderis* on behalf of Portugal. To have gone further—to have made a full statement of

the case against Spain—would have been to preclude the very object which I have in view; that of enabling Spain to preserve peace without dishonour.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Bright) who spoke last, indeed, in his extreme love for peace, proposes expedients which, as it appears to me, would render war inevitable. He would avoid interference at this moment, when Spain may be yet hesitating as to the course which she shall adopt; and the language which he would hold to Spain is, in effect, this—"You have not yet done enough to implicate British faith, and to provoke British honour. You have not done enough, in merely enabling Portuguese rebels to invade Portugal, and to carry destruction into her cities; you have not done enough in combining knots of traitors, whom, after the most solemn engagements to disarm and to disperse them, you carefully reassembled, and equipped and sent back with Spanish arms, to be plunged into kindred Portuguese bosoms. I will not stir for all these things. Pledged though I am by the most solemn obligations of treaty to resent attack upon Portugal as injurious to England, I love too dearly the peace of Europe to be goaded into activity by such trifles as these. No. But give us a good declaration of war, and then I'll come and fight you with all my heart."—This is the honourable gentleman's contrivance for keeping

peace. The more clumsy contrivance of His Majesty's Government is this:—"We have seen enough to show to the world that Spain authorised, if she did not instigate, the invasion of Portugal;" and we say to Spain, "Beware, we will avenge the cause of our ally, if you break out into declared war; but, in the mean time, we will take effectual care to frustrate your concealed hostilities." I appeal to my honourable friend, the member for Dorsetshire, whether he does not prefer this course of His Majesty's Government, the object of which is to nip growing hostilities in the ear, to that of the gallant and chivalrous member for Bristol, who would let aggressions ripen into full maturity, in order that they may then be mowed down with the scythe of a magnificent war.

My honourable friend (Mr. Bankes) will now see why it is that no papers have been laid before the House. The facts which call for our interference in behalf of Portugal, are notorious as the noon-day sun. That interference is our whole present object. To prove more than is sufficient for that object, by papers laid upon the table of this House, would have been to preclude Spain from that *locus penitentiæ* which we are above all things desirous to preserve to her. It is difficult, perhaps, with the full knowledge which the Government must in such cases possess, to judge

what exact portion of that knowledge should be meted out for our present purpose, without hazarding an exposure which might carry us too far. I know not how far I have succeeded in this respect; but I can assure the House, that if the time should unfortunately arrive when a further exposition shall become necessary, it will be found, that it was not for want of evidence that my statement of this day has been defective.

An amendment has been proposed, purporting a delay of a week, but in effect, intended to produce a total abandonment of the object of the Address; and that amendment has been justified by a reference to the conduct of the Government, and to the language used by me in this House, between three and four years ago. It is stated, and truly, that I did not then deny that cause for war had been given by France in the invasion of Spain, if we had then thought fit to enter into war on that account. But it seems to be forgotten that there is one main difference between that case and the present—which difference, however, is essential and all-sufficient. We were then *free* to go to war, if we pleased, on grounds of political expediency. But we were not then *bound* to interfere, on behalf of Spain, as we now are bound to interfere on behalf of Portugal, by the obligations of treaty. War might then have been our free choice, if we had deemed it politic: in-

terference on behalf of Portugal is now our duty, unless we are prepared to abandon the principles of national faith and national honour.

It is a singular confusion of intellect which confounds two cases so precisely dissimilar. Far from objecting to the reference to 1823, I refer to that same occasion to show the consistency of the conduct of myself and my colleagues. We were then accused of truckling to France, from a pusillanimous dread of war. We pleaded guilty to the charge of wishing to avoid war. We described its inexpediency, its inconveniences, and its dangers—(dangers, especially of the same sort with those which I have hinted at to-day); but we declared that, although we could not overlook those dangers, those inconveniences, and that inexpediency, in a case in which remote interest and doubtful policy were alone assigned as motives for war, we would cheerfully affront them all, in a case—if it should arrive—where national faith or national honour were concerned. Well, then, a case *has* now arisen, of which the essence is faith—of which the character is honour. And when we call upon Parliament, not for offensive war—which was proposed to us in 1823—but for defensive armament, we are referred to our abstinence in 1823, as disqualifying us for exertion at the present moment: and are told, that because we did not attack France on that occasion, we must not defend Portugal on this.

I, Sir, like the proposers of the amendment, place the two cases of 1823 and 1826, side by side, and deduce from them, when taken together, the exposition and justification of our general policy. I appeal from the warlike preparations of to-day, to the forbearance of 1823, in proof of the pacific character of our counsels; I appeal from the imputed tameness of 1823, to the Message of to-night, in illustration of the nature of those motives, by which a Government, generally pacific, may nevertheless be justly roused into action. . . . . .

Having thus disposed of the objections to the Address, I come next to the suggestions of some who profess themselves friendly to the purpose of it, but who would carry that purpose into effect by means which I certainly cannot approve. It has been suggested, Sir, that we should at once ship off the Spanish refugees now in this country, for Spain; and that we should, by the repeal of the Foreign Enlistment Act, let loose into the contest all the ardent and irregular spirits of this country. Sir, this is the very suggestion which I have anticipated with apprehension, in any war in which this country might be engaged, in the present unquiet state of the minds of men in Europe. These are the expedients, the tremendous character of which I ventured to adumbrate rather than to describe, in the speech with which I prefaced the present motion. Such ex-

pedients I disclaim. I dread and deprecate the employment of them. So far, indeed, as Spain herself is concerned, the employment of such means would be strictly, I might say, epigrammatically just. The Foreign Enlistment Act was passed in the year 1819, if not at the direct request, for the especial benefit of Spain. What right, then, would Spain have to complain if we should repeal it now, for the especial benefit of Portugal?

The Spanish refugees have been harboured in this country, it is true; but on condition of abstaining from hostile expeditions against Spain; and more than once, when such expeditions have been planned, the British Government has interfered to suppress them. How is this tenderness for Spain rewarded? Spain not only harbours, and fosters, and sustains, but arms, equips, and marshals the traitorous refugees of Portugal, and pours them by thousands into the bosom of Great Britain's nearest ally. So far, then, as Spain is concerned, the advice of those who would send forth against Spain such dreadful elements of strife and destruction, is, as I have admitted, not unjust. But I repeat, again and again, that I disclaim all such expedients; and that I dread especially a war with Spain, because it is the war of all others in which, by the example and practice of Spain herself, such expedients are most likely to be adopted. Let us avoid that war if

we can—that is, if Spain will permit us to do so. But in any case, let us endeavour to strip any war—if war we must have—of that formidable and disastrous character which the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham) has so eloquently described; and which I was happy to hear him concur with me in deprecating, as the most fatal evil by which the world could be afflicted.

Sir, there is another suggestion with which I cannot agree, although brought forward by two honourable members (Sir R. Wilson and Mr. Baring), who have, in the most handsome manner, stated their reasons for approving of the line of conduct now pursued by His Majesty's Government. Those honourable members insist that the French army in Spain has been, if not the cause, the encouragement, of the late attack by Spain against Portugal; that His Majesty's Government were highly culpable in allowing that army to enter into Spain; that its stay there is highly injurious to British interests and honour; and that we ought instantly to call upon France to withdraw it.

There are, Sir, so many considerations connected with these propositions, that were I to enter into them all, they would carry me far beyond what is either necessary or expedient to be stated on the present occasion. Enough, perhaps, it is for me to say, that I do not see how

the withdrawing of the French troops from Spain, could effect our present purpose. I believe, Sir, that the French army in Spain is now a protection to that very party which it was originally called in to put down. Were the French army suddenly removed at this precise moment, I verily believe that the immediate effect of that removal would be, to give full scope to the unbridled rage of a fanatical faction, before which, in the whirlwind of intestine strife, the party least in numbers would be swept away.

So much for the *immediate* effect of the demand which it is proposed to us to make, if that demand were instantly successful. But when, with reference to the larger question of a military occupation of Spain by France, it is averred, that by that occupation the relative situation of Great Britain and France is altered; that France is thereby exalted and Great Britain lowered, in the eyes of Europe;—I must beg leave to say, that I dissent from that averment. The House knows —the country knows—that when the French army was on the point of entering Spain, His Majesty's Government did all in their power to prevent it; that we resisted it by all means, short of war. I have just now stated some of the reasons why we did not think the entry of that army into Spain, a sufficient ground for war; but there was, in addition to those which I have stated, this peculiar reason,—that whatever effect

a war, commenced upon the mere ground of the entry of a French army into Spain, might have, it probably would not have had the effect of getting that army out of Spain. In a war against France at that time, as at any other, you might, perhaps, have acquired military glory; you might, perhaps, have extended your colonial possessions; you might even have achieved, at great cost of blood and treasure, an honourable peace; but as to getting the French out of Spain, *that* would have been the one object which you, almost certainly, would not have accomplished. How seldom, in the whole history of the wars of Europe, has any war between two great powers ended, in the obtaining of the exact, the identical object, for which the war was begun!

Besides, Sir, I confess I think, that the effects of the French occupation of Spain have been infinitely exaggerated.

I do not blame those exaggerations; because I am aware that they are to be attributed to the recollections of some of the best times of our history; that they are the echoes of sentiments, which in the days of William and of Anne, animated the debates and dictated the votes of the British Parliament. No peace was in those days thought safe for this country while the crown of Spain continued on the head of a Bourbon. But were not the apprehensions of those days greatly overstated?—Has the power of Spain swallowed

up the power of maritime England?—Or does England still remain, after the lapse of more than a century, during which the crown of Spain has been worn by a Bourbon,—niched in a nook of that same Spain—Gibraltar; an occupation which was contemporaneous with the apprehensions that I have described, and which has happily survived them?

Again, Sir,—is the Spain of the present day the Spain of which the statesmen of the times of William and Anne were so much afraid? Is it indeed the nation whose puissance was expected to shake England from her sphere? No, Sir, it was quite another Spain—it was the Spain, within the limits of whose empire the sun never set—it was Spain "*with the Indies*" that excited the jealousies and alarmed the imaginations of our ancestors.

But then, Sir, the balance of power!—The entry of the French army into Spain disturbed that balance, and we ought to have gone to war to restore it! I have already said, that when the French army entered Spain, we might, if we chose, have resisted or resented that measure by war. But were there no other means than war for restoring the balance of power?—Is the balance of power a fixed and unalterable standard? Or is it not a standard perpetually varying, as civilization advances, and as new nations spring up, and take their place among established political

communities? The balance of power a century and a half ago was to be adjusted between France and Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and England. Some years afterwards, Russia assumed her high station in European politics. Some years after that again, Prussia became not only a substantive, but a preponderating monarchy.—Thus, while the balance of power continued in principle the same, the means of adjusting it became more varied and enlarged. They became enlarged, in proportion to the increased number of considerable states—in proportion, I may say, to the number of weights which might be shifted into the one or the other scale. To look to the policy of Europe, in the times of William and Anne, for the purpose of regulating the balance of power in Europe at the present day, is to disregard the progress of events, and to confuse dates and facts which throw a reciprocal light upon each other.

It would be disingenuous, indeed, not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was, in a certain sense, a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England:—and it can hardly be supposed that the Government did not sympathize, on that occasion, with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposition. Was nothing then to be

done?—Was there no other mode of resistance, than by a direct attack upon France—or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What, if the possession of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands—harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the possessors? Might not compensation for disparagement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation—that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way—I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain "*with the Indies.*" I called the New World into existence, to redress the balance of the Old.

It is thus, Sir, that I answer the accusation brought against His Majesty's Government, of having allowed the French army to usurp and to retain the occupation of Spain. That occupation, I am quite confident, is an unpaid and unredeemed burden to France. It is a burden of which, I verily believe, France would be glad to rid herself. But they know little of the feelings of the French Government, and of the spirit of the French nation, who do not know, that, worthless or burdensome as that occupation may be, the way to rivet her in it would be, by

angry or intemperate representations, to make the continuance of that occupation a point of honour.

I believe, Sir, there is no other subject upon which I need enter into defence or explanation. The support which the Address has received, from all parties in the House, has been such as would make it both unseemly and ungrateful in me to trespass unnecessarily upon their patience. In conclusion, Sir, I shall only once more declare, that the object of the Address, which I propose to you, is not war:—its object is to take the last chance of peace. If you do not go forth, on this occasion to the aid of Portugal, Portugal will be trampled down, to your irretrievable disgrace:—and then will come war in the train of national degradation. If, under circumstances like these, you wait till Spain has matured her secret machinations into open hostility, you will in a little while have the sort of war required by the pacifitors:—and who shall say where that war will end?

The Amendment was then put and negatived, there appearing only three or four supporters for Mr. Hume's proposition; and the original question was then put and carried, with only the same number of dissentients.

ON THE CORN LAWS.

MARCH 1st, 1827.

Mr. Secretary Canning moved that the House should resolve itself into a Committee, to consider of the Acts of 55 Geo. III, c. 26, and 6 Geo. IV., c. 65, relative to the trade in Corn.

On the Speaker putting the question—

Sir Edward Knatchbull stated, that he had no objection to the House resolving itself into a Committee; but he begged that such assent on his part might not be understood as pledging him, with respect to any ulterior measures which might be proposed to the Committee for their adoption.

Mr. Secretary Canning replied, that of course it was impossible that the honourable baronet, by assenting to the motion, could be so pledged. He was aware, that the more regular course would have been to have given notice of this motion yesterday; but as that had been rendered impossible, in consequence of there being no House, he should now move (the Speaker having left the Chair), that the House do resolve itself into a Committee upon the Corn Laws.

This being done—

Mr. Secretary Canning then addressed the House to the following effect:—Before I open the propositions which it is my duty to lay before the Committee, I trust they will permit me to detain

them a few minutes, while I express my grateful acknowledgments for the indulgence which they have lately extended to me. I do assure them that I should neither have called for that indulgence, nor have been disposed to avail myself of it from considerations merely personal to myself; and certain I am that there are those among the colleagues with whom I have the honour to serve, into whose hands a question of this nature might have been entrusted, with advantage greater than, I fear, it will prove to have been to mine. But, Sir, the reasons which have induced me to take upon myself this task, are simply these. Much as the question upon which I am now to address the House, has been agitated, and great as has been the inflammation of men's minds in respect to it, in this House, and out of this House, it has been thought desirable that when the propositions of the Government on the subject should be brought forward in Parliament, they should be brought forward in that manner which should most clearly indicate that they were the propositions of the Government at large, and not the emanations of a particular department. In the absence of my right honourable friend the President of the Board of Trade (whom severe indisposition prevents from attending in his place this day), I can the more freely say it, that to his care especially this business would have been much better confided, if it had not been that the

consideration to which I have just alluded, induced me to allow it to be placed in my hands.

If this consideration was felt strongly in the beginning of the present Session of Parliament, when the first postponement of the question was proposed, and freely acceded to by the House, undoubtedly it has derived additional strength from the late afflicting dispensation of Providence (of which we are still, Sir, watching the issue with trembling anxiety), which deprives my noble friend at the head of His Majesty's Government, of the opportunity of appearing in his place in the other House of Parliament, to submit there, simultaneously, the same propositions which I am now about to state to this House to-night; and to vindicate to himself that share—that paternity, I may rather say—of a measure, which I know my noble friend was most anxious so to vindicate to himself; and upon the success of which he was resolved to stake (more than perhaps any Minister of this country, within my memory, has ever done upon any measure of such a nature) that eminent reputation which is naturally most dear, as well as most honourable to an individual in his exalted station, and, if necessary, that station itself.

It is, therefore, Sir, not less as the representative of my noble friend at the head of His Majesty's Treasury, than it is as the organ of His Majesty's Government in this House, that I bring

forward the present propositions. I only hope, Sir, that I shall be able so to communicate them to the House, as to prove not altogether an unworthy expositor of a measure which I have derived from him, and of which he entrusted to me the charge.

In acknowledging, Sir, the disqualifications which I willingly admit that I labour under in bringing forward this measure, I must also confess that there is, perhaps, one qualification—minor and accidental—for the discharge of such a duty, to which I may at the same time lay claim. During the long and repeated discussions upon the Corn Laws, which have at different periods occupied the attention of Parliament, it has so happened that I have never taken any part. In the year 1815, when the question was first agitated here, I was absent from this country. In the year 1822, when it was again brought forward, it did happen also, that, from particular circumstances, my lot being then cast for a very distant destination, I was not in the habit of attending very assiduously in this House, and particularly upon the detailed discussions of the Corn Bill. With the single exception of a clause which my situation, as member for Liverpool, occasioned me to bring in—a clause which gave to the House, I am afraid, a great deal of trouble, under the name of the "*grinding* clause," and which was proposed to be inserted in the bill in

its progress through Parliament, with various success, at different stages of its discussion—I took no part whatever in the Corn Bill of 1822.

True it is, also, that in the course of the last Session, I submitted to the House a proposition for the temporary opening of the ports, under the pressure of particular circumstances; but on that occasion there was on all parts of the House, by common consent, an entire abstinence from all discussion on the general subject of Corn. I trust, therefore, that without any sort of merit of mine, I come to the discussion, uninfluenced by feelings or prejudices, to which, under different circumstances, I might have been liable. I come to this discussion without any prepossessions, without any pledges in favour of plans or proposals formerly suggested: and, at the same time, without any bias, without any predilection, still more without any acrimony towards any of the parties, or opinions, concerned in those former discussions.

It does, indeed, surprise me, that into these discussions so much of hostile feeling should occasionally have found its way; first, because I feel that, as to the result, the differences are infinitely less between the parties than they have been stated to be in argument; and, secondly, because, various as the opinions are which have been brought forward on this subject, on different sides, I have never yet seen or heard the extreme

opinion, upon either side, unequivocally and unconditionally supported.

The general question is, as to the introduction of foreign Corn into this country. It is obvious that the extreme opinion, on one side, would be for perpetual, unmitigated prohibition. It is obvious that the extreme opinion on the other side, would be for perpetual, unrestricted importation. Now, I have not yet met with any person who, by writing, or in speaking, has maintained absolutely, and without qualification, either of these extreme opinions.

All between these extreme opinions, however different or distinct the intermediate stages may be, each from the other, are yet only questions of mode and degree—questions, in discussing which, I think—as in discussing many others—gentlemen are apt to use arguments that rather go beyond their own meaning; but, between which, it can at least be said, that there is no impossibility of effecting an approximation. I have never met with the advocate of a free trade in Corn, who, when pressed in argument, has not admitted, that, to the agricultural interest of this country, *some* protection must be given. I have never met, on the other hand, with the person who has carried his agricultural doctrines so high as to say, that he was willing to risk all the consequences of an inflexible and unmitigated exclusion. On the one side, they who contend

most loudly for the admission of foreign Corn, allow, as I have stated, that a protection is due to our domestic agriculture. As to the mode—as to the amount—as to the degree—of that protection, there are many opinions; but, the principle that *some* such protection is due, I have never yet heard broadly denied. On the other side, those of the agricultural interest who press the doctrine of prohibition most strongly, always qualify such doctrine, as to the preference to be given to our own agricultural interest, by the admission, or rather, indeed, by the argument, that, however peremptory the law in that respect may be, there will always remain in Parliament, or (Parliament not sitting) in the Executive Government, the power of allowing foreign Corn to come in to the aid of the country upon any special emergency.

Why, then, Sir, we have the admission on the one side, that our own agriculture is necessarily to be protected—we have the admission on the other side that an unremitting exclusion of foreign Corn is not the mode to be pursued, with a view to that protection. Having these admissions upon the general principle, all the rest is, as I have said, a question of mode and of degree—a question, that is, in what mode, and to what degree, shall that protection to which the agricultural interest of this country is so admitted to be entitled, be extended?

The last few years have produced two or three distinct plans, in reference to the protection, which it is thus conceded on all hands it is necessary to afford to the agricultural interest. I may mention, in the first place, the one to which the authority of the late Mr. Ricardo's name is attached; another, which I believe originated with a noble lord, in the other House of Parliament; and a third, which I shall merely designate as that which comprises the doctrines of the more severe and theoretical of the political economists; and with which every body who is at all acquainted with the periodical literature of the age, may be supposed to be conversant.

These three plans, the Committee will observe, have been devised by persons the most generally favourable to a free trade in Corn; which plans, nevertheless, not only admit the necessity of protection to the landed interest, but specify the mode and degree in which, according to the notions of those persons, that protection should be administered. One of these plans is to impose a duty of twenty shillings per quarter on Corn. (When, in the course of this argument, I say Corn, I speak of Wheat. The duties on the other species of grain follow, of course, in due proportion.) I say, by one of these plans a duty of twenty shillings per quarter on wheat imported, was to be imposed, without reference to price; such duty to be diminished yearly, until it was

reduced to five shillings or ten shillings the quarter; at one of which mitigated rates that duty was to be permanent. The second plan, which was devised by a noble lord, as I have said, in the other House, differed from that of Mr. Ricardo in this respect, that it proposed to begin the scale of protection at a duty of sixteen shillings, to be diminished gradually to ten shillings, and at that rate to be rendered permanent. The last plan to which I have referred, and that which is the most recent, is, to lay a duty, once for all, of five or six shillings per quarter, without reference to price, which duty is to be of permanent duration; but with this provision, that, in case of a great extremity of pressure from a defective supply of our markets, it might be doubtful whether such permanent duty should not be relaxed.

Now, Sir, my objection to each of these three plans, is comprised in the very case supposed, of the possible occurrence of such a pressure, viz. that when that pressure comes, each or any of these plans, if adopted, would prove delusive to the agricultural interest. Sir, it is quite impossible to suppose, that, in a state of extreme pressure, with famine in your streets, in your workshops, and your cottages, the Government could continue to levy any such duty, whether of five shillings or of ten shillings, at the out-ports, on the importation of foreign Corn. Either the Parliament,

if sitting, would feel itself bound to interfere, under the pressure of such an emergency, and would suspend such duty; or if Parliament were not sitting, the Executive Government would assume the discretion to suspend it. The objection, therefore, to this mode of protection seems to be, that it does not answer its purpose; that it admits, indeed, the principle of protection, but does not carry it, in all cases, into effect.

On the other hand, Sir, what is the qualification which they who contend in supporting their side of the question for perpetual prohibition, propose? They are for perpetual prohibition, mitigated only by the occasional interference of Parliament, or the Executive Government. They appeal from legislation to discretion—they are unwilling to take that step now, which their own admission, that it may be to be taken hereafter under the pressure of necessity, clearly shews that they contemplate, as probable; and they either impose upon Parliament the duty of legislating under a dire emergency, or upon the Executive to exercis a discretionary power of suspending that proh ition, which prohibition they contend Parliament ought in the first instance to enact.

From these extremes, I turn, therefore, to more practical questions. What is the degree of protection that ought to be given to our domestic agriculture? Do the laws, as they are now expressed, afford the precise degree of protection

which is desirable? Do they afford it in the best mode? Do they afford it to a proper or to an unnecessary extent?

The law of the year 1815 introduced for the first time, into the legislation of this country, upon the subject of Corn, and its importation from foreign countries, the principle of absolute prohibition—I say, Sir, for the first time; and, so far as I know, it was the first time, with only one exception. It does appear, indeed, upon some researches which have been prosecuted into this subject, that (long anterior to the act of 1815—in the time, indeed, of Edward, IV. some three centuries and a half ago) a law was passed; the substance of that law, I collect to have been as follows :—That, whenever wheat should be at a certain price in this country, not only should foreign wheat be excluded from coming into the kingdom at all, but that the wheat grown in the neighbourhood of one town in England, should not be transmissible to another town, where a difference in the price of that commodity prevailed.

I need hardly observe, Sir, that I mention this law only because, if I were to say, without qualification, that, in 1815, the Legislature for the first time introduced this principle of prohibition with respect to the Corn Trade, I should be liable to be contradicted upon the fact. But, while I am thus citing that ancient law to the House, and very shortly stating its contents, I apprehend that it

cannot be very necessary for me to enter into any arguments upon them—such a precedent is not calculated, at this time of day, to weigh much with the House or with the country.

In the year 1815, then, the principle of absolute prohibition, up to a certain point, was adopted by the Legislature, and this principle, Sir, was qualified by the opposite principle of unrestricted importation. It does appear to me, on a calm review of the character of that act of Parliament —(not at all pretending, that if I had happened to be among those, from whose deliberations that measure proceeded, I should have been at all wiser than my neighbours)—it does appear to me, Sir, as if this was an experiment to combine the most opposite principles in one and the same act of legislation. In the act of 1815, Sir, here is absolute prohibition, up to eighty shillings; but the moment you turn the point of eighty shillings, you arrive at unlimited importation.

Now, what was the consequence of this measure? Not that the extreme forces produced, by their operation, a mean power, and went on amicably together; but that each in its turn prevailed, with its own peculiar mischief—and that you had, within the extent of seven years, from 1815 downwards, every result that could deter men of observation and experience from ever resorting again to the principle either of absolute prohibition, or of unlimited importation;

and, most undoubtedly, from any attempt to unite again the two together.

Let us now inquire what was the operation of this law? It passed, as I have said, in 1815. I say nothing at present of price; I shall come to the consideration of that point presently. The law of 1815 imposed absolute prohibition up to the price of eighty shillings. The harvest of 1816, it is well known, was one of the most unfavourable that this country ever experienced. It was known to be so as early as the beginning of August in that year. It was on the 15th of August, 1816, that that average of prices was to be prepared, which was to govern the question of exclusion on the one side, or importation on the other, for the next three months. On the 15th of August, the price of wheat was above the importing price of the law of 1815; but it had not been so for a sufficiently long period to give an average price above the importing price. The result was, therefore, that the ports remained closed during three starving months from August to November, 1816; and did not open until the 15th of November of that year, after the price had been for about fifteen weeks above the importing price, and when all the northern ports of Europe were shut against supply. The ports opened in November, 1816, and remained open till the November of the following year, when they closed, the average price being less than eighty shillings by the frac-

tion of *five-pence.* The harvest of the year 1817 having been nearly or quite as bad as that of 1816, we had again a scarcity of supply, but the ports, thus closed in November, 1817, of course did not open until February, 1818.

Although the harvest of that year (1818) was most abundant, not only in this country, but in all the corn-growing countries of Europe; yet, by some accident, or by some contrivance, the ports were continued open on the 15th of November, 1818, by a fraction of *two-pence:* and by consequence, for the next three months, from November, 1818, to the quarterly average of February, 1819, an extraordinary influx of foreign Corn continued to inundate the country, already inundated by a plenty of its own growth; prices were in consequence depressed to an extraordinary degree. Indeed, the effect of these three months' importations produced, as I have said, by a fractional difference of *two-pence,* was felt in the depreciation of the market for the three succeeding years.

Thus, by the system of 1815, the ports were shut when the supply at home was deficient, and when the introduction of foreign grain was loudly called for—and opened when the home market was glutted, and when it was most expedient to shut out foreign supply: and the one operation and the other were produced by fractions of *five-pence* and of *two-pence* respectively.

The consequence, then, Sir, of setting these two extreme principles in action, of setting them in conflict with each other, was this—that each class of the community in its turn became a sufferer; and that each class applied to this House for relief. We all remember what the summer of 1817 was. And any honourable gentleman who will take the trouble of turning back to the journals of this House, will see with what hundreds of petitions our table was loaded, in the years 1819, 1820, and 1821, when the agricultural interest was suffering from the extraordinary fluctuation of prices. The extreme difference of prices during the period for which this system was in operation, that is from 1815 to 1822, was not less than this—on the one hand, one hundred and twelve shillings per quarter (this was in the year 1817)—on the other hand, thirty-eight shillings (this was in 1822), a fluctuation being no less than seventy-four shillings per quarter!

In 1822, the House listened to the prayer of the agricultural interest, and the law of 1815 was revised. Of that revised law it may be sufficient to say, that it has never come into operation. It was, nevertheless, in one respect, materially different from the law of 1815. It called duty to its aid; it gave up, as a principle, unlimited prohibition, and contemplated a price at which Foreign Corn might be admitted, under a protecting duty. It admitted importation at eighty shillings

first, and afterwards at seventy shillings—at a duty first of seventeen shillings, and afterwards of twelve shillings. But to that revised law was annexed or prefixed a clause, which stood as an outwork, as it were, to prevent the body of the law from being ever approached. This clause retained the provision of the law of 1815, that importation should be prohibited up to the price of eighty shillings; the consequence of which was, and still is, that we live now as much under the operation of the original provision of exclusion up to eighty shillings, as if the law of 1815 still continued unaltered. The result, then, of the alteration of 1822, has been perfectly null, for the revised law has never come into operation at all.

If, then, unlimited prohibition, or if unrestricted importation, whether singly or jointly, do not afford the proposed protection to agriculture in an unexceptionable manner, and if it be admitted that duty is the better mode of protection, let us now consider the question of duty. Can any fixed duty ever be effectual to answer its own purpose? Take, if you will, Mr. Ricardo's plan; or either of the two plans to which I have called the attention of the Committee; or take either of the duties proposed by the act of 1822, that of seventeen shillings, or that of twelve shillings; and let it be fixed and invariable —and then see how it will operate. Let us suppose the duty of twelve shillings to be in ques-

tion. We find wheat to have been in one year one hundred and twelve shillings per quarter: consider what an aggravation an addition of a duty of twelve shillings would be of the sufferings of the community, from the high price of corn. In another year we find the price of the quarter to be seventy-four shillings less: consider how small would be the protection to the agriculturist from a duty of twelve shillings added to thirty-eight shillings.

It seems perfectly clear, therefore, that a duty, to be effectually a protection on the one hand, and not an undue burden on the other, must vary with the price of Corn. The average of prices, for twelve years immediately preceding 1815, was eighty-four shillings and five-pence. The average of the first six years of this period of twelve years, was seventy-two shillings and two-pence. The average of the six years immediately preceding 1815, was ninety-eight shillings and sixpence. Now, the price assumed by the law of 1815, was eighty shillings. This price was taken upon the consideration, no doubt, that as the war was then at an end, much was to be deducted from the price on account of the cessation of the war expenditure. I think, upon the whole, that that price was fairly chosen; and I mean to affix no blame upon the law of 1815, in this respect.

The average price of Corn for the twelve years,

from 1815 to the last year, was sixty-four shillings and eleven-pence.

The average price, for the six years following 1815, was seventy-four shillings and two-pence.

And the average of the last six years of this period, from 1820, was fifty-five shillings and nine pence.

In the year 1822, the permanent price assumed was seventy shillings. I am not disposed to quarrel with it, although it is to be observed, that it goes upon a very different state of things from that which had governed the law of 1815; for it is to be remembered, that the reduction of taxation and of the public expenditure had produced, in 1822, a considerable difference in the condition of the country.

If it be considered that, in addition to the diminution of expenditure and reduction of taxation which I have just noticed, there was, in the year 1819, another material change effected in the state of the country by the act which restored the value of the currency, I think it will be allowed that on the very same principles on which, in the year 1822, the price of seventy shillings may have been a proper one, sixty shillings would, for all purposes of justice and equity, to all parties, be sufficient at this moment.

Sixty shillings is the medium between the average of the last twelve years, and the average of the last six years of that period; it is the exact

average of the last four years. Is it not fair, therefore, to consider this as the price, to which the protection of the agricultural interest should be limited, and which Parliament, looking to the principle of its former legislation on the subject, would be justified in fixing? My noble friend, whose researches, and opportunities of inquiring into this subject, have been much more laborious and ample than my own, was of opinion, that sixty shillings was the price, up to which the landed interest are entitled to protection.

So much, Sir, for the amount; next, as to the mode in which this protection ought to be given. I have mentioned to the Committee the reasons which induce me to think that a *fixed* duty is not the duty to be adopted—that a fixed duty, without reference to variation of price, must at one time be too high, at another too low—and, by the very circumstance that it does not itself vary, while the other quantity is perpetually varying, it would be introducing perpetual inequalities. I conceive, that a scale of duties, which should vary inversely as the prices of Corn, correcting the excess, and making up the deficiency, and tending by this alternate aid to their general equalization, would be that which would carry in itself the best chance of general steadiness; a property, which is perhaps the first thing, perhaps even before occasional cheapness, to be

considered in legislation on the subsistence of the people.

As to the amount of such duty—the grounds on which any particular amount should be assumed, is matter of more detail than I think it expedient at present to enter into; for I am aware, that prices in foreign markets, and many other matters of that nature, should properly enter into such a discussion. Upon the best consideration which my noble friend at the head of His Majesty's Government was able to give to this subject, he satisfied himself that a protecting duty of twenty shillings, where the price of the quarter of wheat is sixty shillings, would be as much as it would be reasonable and fair to impose, and not more.

Taking as the mean term of our plan the average price of wheat at sixty shillings, and the duty at twenty shillings, it is proposed to diminish that duty by two shillings for every shilling of increase of the average price *above* sixty shillings; and, on the contrary, to increase that duty by two shillings for every shilling which the average price shall fall *below* sixty shillings. The effect of this scale then will be, that, from the assumed price of sixty shillings up to sixty-one shillings, there will be a duty of twenty shillings; from sixty-one shillings to sixty-two shillings, the duty will be eighteen shillings; from sixty-two to sixty-

three shillings, the duty will be sixteen shillings; from sixty-three shillings to sixty-four shillings, fourteen shillings; from sixty-four shillings to sixty-five shillings, twelve shillings; from sixty-five to sixty-six shillings, ten shillings; and so on, until the price having arrived at seventy shillings, all duty will cease, and importation be perfectly free—with the exception merely of the nominal duty of registration at the Custom-house. Thus at sixty-five shillings, the duty will be ten shillings; and at seventy shillings, it will cease altogether, and importation be perfectly free. This, Sir, is the ascending scale of price. On the other hand, as to the descending scale from sixty shillings to fifty-nine shillings, there will be an addition of two shillings. So that, at fifty-five shillings, the duty will amount to thirty shillings—in other words, to a prohibitory duty, as it is intended that at that price it should be.

I trust, Sir, that it will be felt that this project has been impartially conceived; and I confess that I can anticipate from those who insist upon a law of prohibition, on the one hand—or from those who insist upon unlimited importation, on the other hand—no objection, but such as must inevitably belong, in their eyes, to every plan of compromise or settlement.

I am aware, indeed, that there is one question which may arise from the statement that I have made—I am aware that I may be asked, by the

agricultural body, "If there be any point on which you are prepared to grant us a prohibitory duty, why not, at that point, establish an absolute prohibition?" I will tell you, Sir. In the first place, I think it no light matter, with respect to a subject which has been, not for years only, but for ages, under the consideration of Parliament, that there has been no instance, excepting that of 1815, wherein prohibition has been an admitted principle of legislation. Even during a series of years, particularly from 1670 to 1774, when it was the object of Parliament, not only to discourage importation, but to encourage the exportation of British Corn, that discouragement of importation was carried into effect, not by prohibition, but by duty. In the second place, I must say, that after the experience we have had, under the law of 1815, there is no great inducement to our continuing this innovation, (for so I must call it). Thirdly, Sir, it seems to me desirable, that if there is to be a trade in Corn at all, it should be conducted, as far as possible, on the principles of other trades, in a sober, regular course, and not by perpetual jerks and impulses arising out of extraordinary emergencies. I am persuaded, that if importation be always free, taking sufficient security against an inundation of the home market, it will flow in a regular, equable current, supplying the real wants of the country, without overwhelming it; instead of rendering

the trade; as now, under the principle of prohibition, a perpetual series of alternations between a drought and a deluge.

I think this project will tend to equalize the prices, and keep that equalization of prices steady. The market will indeed assume such a steadiness, that, instead of a fluctuation between one hundred and twelve shillings at one time, and thirty-eight shillings at another, the vibrations will probably be found to be limited within the small circle of from about fifty-five shillings to about sixty-five shillings. The plan will provide against the mischief arising from sudden gluts in the market at one time, and sudden dearths compelling us to legislate occasionally, in contradiction to our general system of legislation, at another. It will get rid of another evil of very great magnitude—the abuses of the system of averages. If, as I have already stated, we see that a fraction of *five-pence* one way, and of *two-pence* the other, shut the ports when they ought to have been open, and opened them when they ought to have been shut, it is impossible not to entertain some suspicion of the soundness of the system by which such inconvenient effects were produced. By this plan, the averages will be declared weekly, and each week's average will govern the duty of the ensuing week; what room can there be, in the course of a week, for deep speculation? In an interval of three months, it is possible for great

capitalists to produce an effect upon prices by unfair means. But, under the new arrangement, when the average of one Saturday will be overturned by the average of the next Saturday, what temptation—what opportunity can there be for the commission of fraud?

This plan will therefore tend to vindicate the respectability of the Corn Trade, which will assume, even in the eyes of those by whom it has been most suspected, a character more analogous to the regular trade of British merchants in other branches of commerce. The plan will also get rid entirely of the possibility of such an interference on the part of the Executive Government, which some gentlemen refer to with great complacency as a cure, but which I confess I consider an aggravation of the present system. I am perfectly confident, and so are my colleagues, that we did right some months ago in taking upon ourselves the responsibility of admitting Corn not admissible by law. But, though we were right in taking care of the public good, we were not unconscious at the time, and we have since received painful information, that while we did a great public good, we did much private mischief. The measure which was adopted to save the country from the suffering which would have followed a scarcity—may have had the effect of injuring more than one private fortune. Honourable gentlemen talk glibly of responsibility, and

taunt Ministers, as if they would have been incapable of filling their situations, if they had hesitated to exercise an extraordinary discretion in such an emergency. I do not say, that, under a similar emergency, we should not be ready to act with similar decision again; but though such an emergency may have justified the exercise of an extraordinary discretion, it is surely incumbent upon Ministers to endeavour to prevent a recurrence of it.

These are some of the benefits which this plan presents to the House; and if it should appear, upon trial, that interests, which are now supposed to be wide as the poles asunder, may thus be approximated more nearly than is now believed to be possible—such a result would be worth all the rest. It will tend to sweeten the ill blood which has too long subsisted between two classes of the community looking with jealousy at each other, and to unite conflicting opinions as well as interests, which have appeared to be altogether irreconcileable.

These are the principles on which the plan of His Majesty's Ministers is founded: these are the objects which they propose to carry into effect. I have now only to commit the Resolutions, which I have to propose, to the judgment of the Committee, whom I entreat, to whatever objections they may deem the plan to be liable in detail, to receive it, as it is intended to be, in the

light of a peace-offering from my noble friend at the head of the Government.

The Resolutions are calculated, as I verily believe, to allay jealousies, to terminate disputes, and to convince those who have been long causelessly arrayed against each other, under a notion that their respective prosperities were incompatible, that there is room enough in the world for both, and that their advantages may be doubled by union.

In this spirit the Resolutions have been conceived, and in this spirit I trust they will be accepted.

The subjoined Resolutions were then agreed to:—

RESOLUTIONS.

* That it is the opinion of this Committee, that any sort of Corn, Grain, Meal, and Flour, which may now by law be imported into the United Kingdom, should at all times be admissible for home use, upon payment of the duties following, viz.:—

If imported from any foreign country.

WHEAT, viz.	£	s.	d.
——— Whenever the average price of Wheat, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 60*s.** and under 61*s.* the quarter, the duty shall be for every quarter...	1	0	0

* The average price of Wheat was subsequently altered to 62*s.* and a fraction, and the other sorts of Corn, Grain, Meal, and Flour, underwent a proportionate modification.

WHEAT, viz.	£	s.	d.
---- and in respect of every integral shilling, by which such price shall be above 60*s*. such duty shall be decreased by 2*s*. until such price shall be 70*s*.			
———— Whenever such price shall be at or above 70*s*. the duty shall be for every quarter	0	1	0
———— Whenever such price shall be under 60*s*. and not under 59*s*. the duty shall be for every quarter.....	1	2	0
---- and in respect of each integral shilling, or any part of each integral shilling, by which such price shall be under 59*s*. such duty shall be increased by 2*s*.			
BARLEY.			
———— Whenever the average price of Barley, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 30*s*. and under 31*s*. the quarter, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	10	0
---- and in respect of every integral shilling by which such price shall be above 30*s*. such duty shall be decreased by 1*s*. 6*d*. until such price shall be 37*s*.			
———— Whenever such price shall be at or above 37*s*. the duty shall be for every quarter...	0	1	0
———— Whenever such price shall be under			

BARLEY.	£	s.	d.
30s. and not under 29s. the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	11	6
---- and in respect of each integral shilling, or any part of each integral shilling, by which such price shall be under 29s. such duty shall be increased by 1s. 6d.			
OATS.			
———— Whenever the average price of Oats, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 21s. and under 22s. the quarter, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	7	0
---- and in respect of every integral shilling by which such price shall be above 21s. such duty shall be decreased by 1s. until such price shall be 28s.			
———— Whenever such price shall be at or above 28s. the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	1	0
———— Whenever such price shall be under 21s. and not under 20s. the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	8	0
---- and in respect of each integral shilling, or any part of each integral shilling, by which such price shall be under 20s. such duty shall be increased by 1s.			
RYE, PEAS, AND BEANS.			
———— Whenever the average price of Rye,			

RYE, PEAS, AND BEANS.	£	s.	d.
or of Peas, or of Beans, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 35*s*. and under 36*s*. the quarter, the duty shall be for every quarter	0	15	0
---- and in respect of every integral shilling by which such price shall be above 35*s*. such duty shall be decreased by 1*s*. 6*d*. until such price shall be 45*s*.			
———— Whenever such price shall be at or above 45*s*. the duty shall be for every quarter	0	1	0
———— Whenever such price shall be under 35*s*. and not under 34*s*. the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	16	6
---- and in respect of each integral shilling, or any part of each integral shilling, by which such price shall be under 34*s*., such duty shall be increased by 1*s*. 6*d*.			
WHEAT, MEAL, AND FLOUR.			
———— For every barrel being 196lb., a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on five bushels of Wheat.			
OATMEAL.			
———— For every quantity of 252lb., a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of Oats.			
MAIZE OR INDIAN-CORN, BUCK-WHEAT, BEER OR BIGG.			
———— For every quarter, a duty equal in			

	£	s.	d.
MAIZE, OR INDIAN-CORN, BUCK-WHEAT, BEER OR BIGG.			
amount to the duty payable on a quarter of Barley.			

If the produce of, and imported from any British Possession in North America, or elsewhere, out of Europe.

	£	s.	d.
WHEAT.			
——— For every quarter.....			
---- until the price of British Wheat, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 65*s.* per quarter.			
——— Whenever such price shall be at or above 65*s.*, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	0	6
BARLEY.			
——— For every quarter.....	0	2	6
---- until the price of British Barley, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 33*s.* per quarter.			
——— Whenever such price shall be at or above 33*s.*, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	0	6
OATS.			
——— For every quarter.....	0	2	0
---- until the price of British Oats, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 24*s.* per quarter.			
——— Whenever such price shall be at or above 24*s.*, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	0	6

RYE, BEANS, AND PEAS.	£	s.	d
For every quarter.....	0	3	0
---- until the price of British Rye, or of Beans, or of Peas, made up and published in manner required by law, shall be 40*s.* per quarter.			
———— Whenever such price shall be at or above 40*s.*, the duty shall be for every quarter.....	0	0	6

WHEAT, MEAL, AND FLOUR.

———— For every barrel being 196lb., a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on five bushels of Wheat.

OATMEAL.

———— For every quantity of 252lb., a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of Oats.

MAIZE, OR INDIAN-CORN, BUCK-WHEAT, BEER OR BIGG.

———— For every quarter, a duty equal in amount to the duty payable on a quarter of Barley.

That it is the opinion of this Committee that all the said duties shall be regulated and determined from week to week, by the average prices of Corn, made up in manner required by law, which prices shall, at the several ports of the United Kingdom, determine the several rates of the said duties for and during the week next after the receipt of the proper certificates of such average prices, at such ports respectively.

CATHOLIC QUESTION—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MARCH 6th, 1827.

Sir F. Burdett, on the 5th of March, submitted a motion for taking into consideration the laws inflicting penalties and disabilities on His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects.

Mr. Secretary Canning rose at half-past two o'clock in the morning, and spoke to the following effect:*—Sir, after the protracted discussion to which this debate has been already extended, the House has a security in my discretion, as well as in my present inability to address them at considerable length, that I shall not trespass long upon their attention. Indeed, I am principally induced to rise, lest it might appear disrespectful to the House and unbecoming in me, on account of the station which I have the honour to fill, were I to abstain from stating (at least shortly and suc-

* The lateness of the hour at which Mr. Canning rose in the debate, and the time (nearly two hours) occupied in the delivery of the speech, rendered it quite impracticable that a complete report of it should be published in the newspapers of the morning on which it was spoken. A full report of this speech is now for the first time published; it is printed from copious notes, taken at the time, and subsequently transcribed, with fidelity and diligence, by the Editor.

cinctly) the grounds on which I give my vote this night. In doing so, I think it may not be inexpedient to recal the attention of the House, more accurately than it has been called during the greater part of the discussion, to the question immediately under its consideration.

The honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett) who brought this question forward, introduced it with the generosity and prodigality of argument of a person, who thought that all—or at least, that the main point—was included in his Resolution, and omitted to state accurately and precisely the purport and extent of the proposition before the House. Of this omission, I must say, a most unfair and unwarrantable advantage has been taken, simply because the honourable baronet did not ask the plain question, which was all that was intended by the Resolution,—"Do you, a new Parliament, entertain the same opinion as your predecessors did, as to the propriety and importance of considering the claims of your Roman Catholic fellow-subjects?" I own I did not expect that therefore an objection would have been made to him, for not having included the details of a measure in a preliminary resolution of principle. I should not have expected this misconstruction of argument from a member who had only sat in this House for the first time; but I confess I was little prepared to have an example of such a confusion, set by judicial accuracy.

The speech of the right honourable and learned gentleman (the Master of the Rolls) has been partly historical and partly critical. The historical part, on the admission of the right honourable and learned gentleman himself, was inapplicable to the present question; and I shall presently show that his critical part was not less inapposite. The right honourable and learned gentleman began, continued, and ended his speech, by complaining that no securities were offered on the part of the Roman Catholics. If the right honourable and learned gentleman required securities, how were they to be propounded? Where? and in what? In a Resolution forsooth calling upon you to declare, whether you will affirm or abjure the inherited opinion of your predecessors? When the House declares its opinion in affirmation or negation of the necessity and importance of entertaining this measure, then will be the time for deliberating on the measure in its details—then will be the time for considering what bill, and what provisions, it will be proper to introduce—then will be the time to take the question of securities into consideration, and to ingraft them upon any measure which may be brought forward, subsequent to the decision of this question. But, Sir, until that time arrives, honourable gentlemen might, without impropriety, restrain the expression of their surprise, that the honourable baronet had not, in the first instance, introduced a measure

in all its details to the House. The honourable baronet has done right in omitting to do so. And I certainly, for one, should have thought that the honourable baronet had acted in a very strange manner, and that he had perplexed and defeated his own object, if he had, in the first stage of his proceeding, encumbered his resolution with securities for the Protestant religion, and with all those other and numerous accessories which he might have collected, from the deluge up to the Revolution.

The question now propounded to the House is this—"Is the House deeply impressed with the necessity of taking into immediate consideration the laws inflicting penalties on His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, with the view of removing them?" This is the question—this the simple principle which the House is now called upon to negative or to affirm. Is this question an unimportant one—is it a question of idle and otiose curiosity? No! But it is asked, because since the last discussion upon this subject here, the House has been returned to its constituents, and because an endeavour has been made to spread abroad an impression that it is now sent back wholly changed — an assertion which I totally and utterly disbelieve. The object of the resolution then, Sir, is to ascertain whether this imputed change has been wrought, and if it has taken place, (which I again declare I disbelieve)

it would be surely impolitic and unbecoming to bring forward any measure of the kind, at an inauspicious moment, or to waste the time of the House by a discussion, which could only excite angry feelings, without the hope of a fortunate result. If it were otherwise, if it should appear that no change has been effected in the sentiments of this House, the ground would then be fairly open for matters connected with this resolution, and for the consideration of those topics consequent upon its adoption.

But, Sir, because a detailed scheme of securities has not been now prematurely brought forward, the right honourable and learned gentleman has thought proper to accuse me of abandoning the idea of securities, which I at one time regarded as a necessary accompaniment of any measure of relief to the Roman Catholics, and upon this he has founded a charge of inconsistency against me. Sir, I have not altered or abandoned any sentiment or principle I have ever entertained upon this important question. It would have been more correct and satisfactory in the right honourable and learned gentleman (were it within his power to do so) to have stated in what way I have abandoned my principles. Why does the right honourable and learned gentleman say, that I have abandoned the notion of the necessity of securities? What proof has he that I have done so? Where is the evidence of my dereliction of

them? I do not know whether or not the right honourable and learned gentleman was in Parliament in 1812, when I first voted for this measure. [It was intimated across the table to Mr. Canning that the Master of the Rolls was not then in Parliament.] Well! as the right honourable and learned gentleman was not in Parliament, I will furnish him with a short abridgment of the history of this question since that period. I will be his historian of these later times.

In the year 1812, I took the liberty to move a resolution, which was very nearly the same as that now proposed by the honourable baronet, with this difference, that, as it was near the close of the session, the resolution that I moved pledged the House "to take into its most serious consideration *early in the next session of Parliament*, the state of the laws affecting His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom; to the stability of the Protestant establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of His Majesty's subjects."

It so happened, that the termination of the session (like the termination of that of last year) was at the eve of a dissolution—my resolution was carried—and the Parliament of 1813 adopted the pledge of their predecessors. A bill was then

brought in by Mr. Grattan, to whom—from what I thought to be due to his fame, his station, and venerable age—I surrendered, and with pleasure, the fruits of the unexpected victory that I had gained—a victory, which I will call unparalleled, as my resolution was carried by a majority of 159.* However, in pursuance of certain principles which I made the guide of my conduct, I undertook to form a scheme of securities, which were approved of by the House, and incorporated in the bill.

Now, Sir, a good deal of fallacy lurks under this word *securities*, which, from the way they have been talked of by the right honourable and learned gentleman, might be thought to be of a political nature, and to involve important considerations of the interests of church and state. No such thing. They consisted simply of two points—the first was, to give the Crown a certain authority in the nomination of Catholic bishops; and, secondly, to subject the correspondence of the See of Rome, with the Roman Catholic subjects in this country, to the inspection of Government. But this correspondence was not created by the Bill; it did then, and does now exist. And, supposing it even had been created by the bill, is not that question now greatly changed by the restitution of the Pope, who is at present in the

* The greatest majority by which a motion on the Catholic Question was ever carried in the House of Commons.

full exercise of his authority at Rome? Then he had none, and was in captivity; and however glibly some gentlemen may talk of the dangers of of the restitution of that see, it is more satisfactory that he should enjoy established authority for every purpose that he now possesses it, than that he should be situated as he then was. To estimate the value and importance of the securities then offered, it is necessary to consider the time and circumstances under which they were proposed.

But my right honourable friend (Mr. Goulburn) seems to think that all securities were useless, because they were unsatisfactory to the Roman Catholics to whom they were proposed. Was their usefulness defeated on account of the dissatisfaction that they created in the minds of the Roman Catholics? No! They were rendered useless, because, Sir, your predecessor in that chair* took a share in the discussion in the Committee, and successfully opposed the clause which proposed the admission of Roman Catholics to seats in Parliament, and the victory which he then obtained, has left us the precious legacy we are now enjoying.

It was not the distaste of Romish ecclesiastics, therefore, that rendered the proposed securities

* Mr. Abbot, the present Lord Colchester, late Speaker of the House of Commons.

useless. It may be true that they, in despair of ever experiencing its benefits, thought fit instantly to decry, and treat with disdain, what they had lost all hope of possessing. It might easily be imagined that any body of men, when they began to discover that all hope of obtaining what they desired was at end, saw very good reason for retracting any concession that they might previously have made, in the moment of their anxiety to obtain it. If any man were about to buy a horse, and the seller suddenly repented, and refused to make good the bargain, would not the person with whom he was dealing express himself infinitely delighted to get off the bargain, and declare that he never intended to give the price that had been mentioned? So it was with the ecclesiastics of the Romish Church in Ireland; they were deprived of what they earnestly desired, and then they suddenly turned round and declared, that they would never have accepted that, which in truth and reality, never was within their power to accept. Amidst the historical confusion of this historical night, it is doubly provoking to have it said that the bill of 1813 was rejected by persons, to whom, from the stage in which the bill was when it was stifled, these securities could never have been offered.

So much for the measure of 1813. Now one word for myself. Any person, who had heard the speech of the right honourable and learned

gentleman, would suppose that my principle had been to make a bargain with the ecclesiastics, to know what they would give and take, and to frame the bill from their answer. Sir, if there has been one principle which I have inculcated *usque ad nauseam*, it is that which in 1812 I adopted, and from which no courtship—no kindness—no intreaties—no invitation would induce me to depart—not to exchange a word with any Roman Catholic on this subject. This resolution I came to—from no motive of disrespect to the members of the Roman Catholic body—but I wish to assure the House, that in whatever part I have at any time taken on this question, I have taken it solely on my own conviction of its justice and its expediency. I have never had any consultation with either prelate, or priest, or layman of the Roman Catholic persuasion, in any measure which I have had a share in preparing, with the exception of one professional gentleman employed in drawing up the technical provisions of the bill, in the preparation of which I was engaged. Is this principle then—is this mode of proceeding one of a bargain and sale? Nothing like it. No! my full and settled conviction (and one which I never let pass an opportunity of endeavouring to impress upon the House) always was this:—that Parliament should inquire, deliberate and determine, as to the course which it was wise, and upright, and expedient, to pursue; and, having

done that, should not invite the Catholics to accept or reject, but call upon them to obey. Whether it be for good—whether it be for evil—whether it be in kindness or with penalty, that alone is all that Parliament can do consistently with what it owes to the country—consistently with the due discharge of its legislative functions; for the Parliament that condescends to bargain, abandons its duty of legislation.

But the misrepresentation does not end here: It was said by my right honourable friend (Mr. Goulburn) that the unwillingness, the asperity with which securities were received by the Roman Catholic Clergy, had cooled their parliamentary advocates in proposing them. Sir, whatever may have been the unwelcome reception the propositions for these securities may have met with in Ireland, there is no man conversant with what daily passes from the ordinary sources of general intelligence,—(with which, even those who do not disdain the reading of *quartos*, are not altogether unacquainted)—there is no man, I say, who does not know that any expression of dissatisfaction that may have been expressed by the Roman Catholic clergy, fell infinitely short of the terms of virulence, of taunting, and of contempt which were uttered respecting these very securities, and which, though not properly entitled to be present, I myself "*hisce auribus*" heard uttered by noble lords in another place. I myself have

heard more than one noble lord say tauntingly, "If it be intended to give relief—to do any thing, —do it largely—do it effectively—do it with an open heart and liberal hand; do not come with a boon in one hand, and securities in the other, adding insult to degradation." In this House, then, I am twitted for the want of securities—and in the other, securities are rejected with contempt, and thus this well-established see-saw renders it impossible that any bill should be devised which should escape both Houses.

Since the year 1813, I certainly have not meddled in the workmanship of securities; at the same time, I assure my right honourable friend (Mr. Goulburn) that I am perfectly ready to vote for securities; but I am not to be set down as a security-grinder. As to the House of Lords, they never had an opportunity of being made acquainted with the securities which I originated and proposed. The Lords tell us there is no danger, and those holding the same opinions with them here, call upon us to find them a security without telling us what is the danger. They impose upon the friends of this measure a task similar to that which was imposed upon the prophet in the Bible, who was required, not merely to find the interpretation of a dream, but to guess the dream itself. So I have been called upon, not only to find securities, but to guess the danger. If those who require securities will describe the dangers

which they apprehend, I will find the securities; but it is too much to require me to find the danger and the security too.

This, however, I will say, that I have always entertained a firm opinion, that at whatever period the Catholic Question might be settled, it ought to be provided in that settlement that the Crown should, in some shape or other, interfere in the nomination of the Catholic bishops. It has been truly stated by an honourable gentleman, (Mr. Bankes) that the King of Prussia has obtained securities from the Catholics in his dominions; it was perfectly true that the King of the Netherlands was negociating for similar securities: it was perfectly true also, that in Austria and Saxony, and other States, such securities existed. But how have they been obtained? By going to the proper market of negociation—to the fountain-head—to the Pope at Rome.

But it should be remembered that the various states which I have mentioned had an intercourse and means of negociation with the Pope, which we do not possess. In the existing state of the law we cannot enter into any such negociation. The year after I came into the office which I have now the honour to hold, I had the opportunity of ascertaining this fact.

In those popular works which are resorted to by the unlearned, I have read that it was high treason to correspond with the Pope. Very soon

after I came into office, a letter was addressed to our most gracious Sovereign from the Pope, announcing his accession to the spiritual throne of the continent. That letter was accompanied by another of a very complimentary kind, addressed to myself by the Pope's Secretary. Although I had always thought that the only way in which the question of the securities to be required from the Catholics could be settled, was by a negociation with the Pope, yet I knew that it might be as much as my reputation was worth, to be detected in a correspondence with his Holiness. At length I bethought myself of consulting the law officers of the Crown on the subject of the correspondence; and, in answer to an application which I directed to be made, I received a letter, which, as, I have referred to it, I shall take the liberty of reading to the House :*

"Sir,

"We have had the honour of receiving Mr. Planta's letter, stating that, the Pope, having announced to His Majesty his elevation to the pontifical throne, in a letter, of which Mr. Planta inclosed to us a copy, with a translation, accompanied by another letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State, and the question having

* Only part of this opinion was quoted by Mr. Canning, but as the whole of it has been supplied to this work from an authentic source, it is here inserted in full.—EDITOR.

therefore arisen, as to whether any answer should be returned by His Majesty and his Government to this notification ; you had directed him to refer the same to us, confidentially, and to request we would favour you with our opinion whether, according to the law at present in existence, there is *præmunire* in such a correspondence with the Pope and Cardinal Secretary of State. In compliance with your request, we have carefully perused and considered the letters above referred to, and beg leave to state that, by the Stat. 5th, Eliz. cap. 1, s. 2. advisedly and wittingly to attribute, by any speech, open deed, or act, any manner of jurisdiction, authority, or pre-eminence to the See of Rome, or to any bishop of the same see, within this realm, subjects a party, for the first offence, to the penalties of *præmunire ;* and as the Pope, by virtue of his office, claims, as we conceive, authority, jurisdiction, and pre-eminence over the whole Christian Church, and certainly over the Catholic Church in this realm ; and, as by the letters, his elevation to the supreme pontificate is in terms announced, which we apprehend would be construed as importing such a claim, we are of opinion that any answer to these letters, which might be interpreted into an implied recognition of such a claim, might be considered as bringing the party, being a subject, writing or advising it, within the operation of the above statute. It is, we think, worthy of remark, that the

legislature, by carefully adopting the title of Bishop of Rome, instead of that of Pope, in the various acts passed since the reformation, seems anxiously to have avoided any such implied recognition.

"We further think, that the reference made in the Pope's letter to the Catholic Church in His Majesty's dominions, and the recommendation of the weal of that Church to His Majesty, render caution upon this occasion particularly necessary.

"We have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) "R. GIFFORD.
"J. S. COPLEY."

Now, Sir, I began to consider with myself the penalties consequent upon *præmunire;* and finding that a correspondence with his Holiness would subject me to those penalties, I looked into that profound work, "Burn's Justice of the Peace," to ascertain what those penalties were. Accordingly, Sir, I found upon inquiry, that any persons attainted in a *præmunire* "should be put out of the King's protection, their lands and goods forfeited to the King, and their bodies (wheresoever they may be found) should be taken and ransomed at the King's will." I further discovered, that "so odious was this offence formerly, that a man who was attainted of the same might have been slain by any one without danger

of law; because it was provided by law that a man might do to him, as to the King's enemy, and a man may lawfully kill an enemy; and, therefore, by the 5th Eliz. c. 1. it is enacted that it shall not be lawful for any one to slay any person attainted in a *præmunire;* but he is so far out of the King's protection, that he is disabled to bring an action for any injury whatever. And no one, knowing him guilty, can with safety give him aid, comfort, or relief." 1 Haw. 55.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS.—The right honourable gentleman does not read that as part of the opinion.

MR. SECRETARY CANNING.—No; it is not the right honourable and learned gentleman, but that profound work, "Burn's Justice," which is my present authority. Such were some of the penalties incident to a *præmunire,* which I, an unlearned person, naturally anxious to obtain information on the subject, discovered. It was natural, Sir, that I should look to the penalties; and looking to them, I resolved I would not correspond with his Holiness the Pope. Accordingly, Sir, I did not write a single line in reply to the polite communication of the Cardinal Secretary, neither did I advise His Majesty to return any answer to the letter of his Holiness. I am exceedingly glad to avail myself of the present opportunity, in a way which will probably reach Rome, and which (without subjecting me to the penalties of a

præmunire) will assure the venerable persons in question, that my silence, on the occasion to which I have alluded, is not to be attributed to any want of respect for them on my part. As long as this admirable law, inflicting the penalties of *præmunire* on any person corresponding with the See of Rome, remains unrepealed, it is not likely that any person will have courage enough to become his Holiness's correspondent; yet to the See of Rome, I am persuaded, if we wish to have an efficient security from the Catholics, the question must come at last.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS.—I consider that the opinion referred to was contained in a confidential communication.

MR. SECRETARY CANNING said, that in a case like this, touching his life and fortune, he certainly had a right to state the opinion which he had received.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS was understood to complain of the letter which had been read, being thus brought forward.

MR. SECRETARY CANNING.—Sir, I do not exactly understand this interruption. It is, in my opinion, most extraordinary, that when I, as Secretary of State, had, on a question affecting the discharge of my public duty, required the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, that any objection should be made to its production. In a hundred official cases similar opinions are required

by me, on matters connected with the discharge of my public duties, which I am free to make public or not, as in my discretion I may think proper. I assert, this is a public document, on the production of which depends the judgment to be pronounced as to whether or not I have properly executed my public duty as a Minister of the Crown. With this view I called for the opinion of His Majesty's law officers, and received it—not in a non-official, but in an official way; and that being the case, I have a right to refer to it. As to the opinion which I have just quoted, it would have probably lain in the obscurity to which I had consigned it, had it not been for the extraordinary language which has been held elsewhere, and which has been repeated in this House, impeaching my honour and honesty. The right honourable and learned gentleman was not even original in his remarks. I have met them in print,* so that I was prepared for the

* Dr. Philpotts, a short time before this debate, published a Letter to Mr. Canning on the Catholic Question, between which and the speech of the Master of the Rolls there was a remarkable coincidence, both in argument and in expression. The principal argument in both was founded upon an erroneous supposition that Mr. Canning had abandoned the expediency of securities, which, in 1813, he originated and earnestly enforced. This brush between the Master of the Rolls and Mr. Canning, did not cause the slightest diminution of the personal regard previously subisting between them.—EDITOR.

attack which has been made upon me, although I vow to God, that if, before I came into this House, I had been required to predict the quarter from which the attack would proceed, the quarter from which it has proceeded would have been the last which I should have conjectured.

Well, then, passing over this, to me, most painful part of the subject, I proceed to a farther consideration of the securities relating to correspondence with the See of Rome. Sir, it seems, securities are required against the private correspondence carried on between the Catholics of this country and the See of Rome. Be it remembered, this correspondence is wholly of a spiritual nature, touching the granting of indulgences, and other practices existing in that particular religion, having reference to private life, and coming properly and strictly under ecclesiastical cognizance. True, the securities which I proposed, failed along with the Bill of which they were to have formed a part; and when they failed, my labours on the subject of securities were at an end. If there were any persons who really thought, and did not, for the purposes of debate, pretend that any danger could accrue from a correspondence with the court of Rome, respecting the marriage of second cousins twice removed, it was for them to bring in a Bill to regulate such correspondence. Do not let honourable gentlemen suppose that this practice does not go on—it goes on daily.

The same learned authority (Burn's Justice) which informed me on the subject of *præmunire*, will apprise these gentlemen, that by 13th Elizabeth, cap. 2, any one obtaining a papal bull, is guilty of high treason. Now, Sir, this also is done every day. There is not a day in which some Catholic does not commit this offence, and yet it is gravely said, that the country cannot be in safety, unless these bulls were taken by the horns. I cannot believe any person to be sincere, who, having slumbered over this practice for ages, without proposing a remedy, only thought of it at the moment when the Catholic Question came on to be debated. And, am I now, Sir, to be told that these bulls of Rome are running about wild and unchecked, in consequence of my rashness and apostacy? Is it possible for me, Sir, consistently with a due regard to decency, to treat with sufficient contempt such an accusation? It is for every man to defend his own consistency, and I therefore may be excused for some anxiety on the score of mine.

If it be true that the securities are essential, why is the country suffered to remain in danger for the want of them?—and if it be true that they are worthless, what claims to candour have those who lay such stress on their adoption?

An honourable gentleman (Mr. Moore) who spoke late in the debate last night, talked of the coronation oath as a barrier to Catholic emancipa-

tion. I believe that the honourable member must be very new to this House, or he would have known that the day of reliance by the opponents of this measure on the coronation oath has gone by. To satisfy that honourable member, however, and to set his mind at ease, I will, by way of answer, read a passage from a speech of a noble friend of mine (Lord Liverpool), now unhappily attacked by severe indisposition—who was the leader of the party that had formerly placed great reliance on the coronation oath, as an obstacle to the granting of the Catholic claims. My noble friend, on the occasion I allude to, said, "That he could not consider the coronation oath as any obstacle to the removal of the civil and political disabilities of the Roman Catholics. The oath was an oath to protect the established church and clergy of the realm. The removal of the disabilities might possibly affect that church, but it could only do so *consequentially*. Many wise and good men were of opinion that it would strengthen the church; and if Parliament presented a bill to the King for his acceptance, grounded, as no doubt they would upon this assumption, he did not see how the King could be advised to consider it at variance with the obligations of the oath which he had taken." This, at least, is one bugbear fairly disposed of, and no more ought to be said of the coronation oath. What other dangers might

await the question at this eleventh hour, I have yet to learn.

A singular fate has always attended this question. They who advocated it, put to its opponents these questions—"Will you do what we propose?" "Will you do nothing?" "Will you do something?"—and—"What will you do?" "Why do you dislike what we propose?" The only answer to these questions was—"We won't do what you propose." The other questions were left unanswered; and from 1813 to the present time, I have not been able to learn what dangers were apprehended.

I remember once to have heard, that great danger was supposed to arise from the admission of what was described as a large and untold proportion of a disaffected population, into the military force of the kingdom. But, somehow or other, in the year 1818 an Act was passed, by which every Roman Catholic in the army became capable of filling the highest station in the military service of this country. [Some honourable member observed, that a Catholic could not rise to the rank of commander-in-chief.] The honourable gentleman says, that a Catholic could not rise to the rank of commander-in-chief. By law he might. And what is whimsical enough is, that at the moment when this great change was effected —when our fleets and armies were opened to the Catholics—when the truncheon of command at

sea and in the field was entrusted to their controul—no securities were provided, or sought to be provided, against the dangers to be apprehended from the exercise of such a command; no member of this House was then arraigned and stigmatized for abandoning them, whilst the most operose precautions were adopted for opening a letter, the object of which was to enable a man to eat meat on a fast day. No letters, according to their system, granting permission to abstain from fish can be perused, without first meeting the watchful eye of the right honourable secretary (Mr. Peel) near me. But the armies may be led to victory, and the fleets may be steered to distant countries, without a single security being asked or expected. Whence, then, all of a sudden, has this necessity sprung up? Again, in the year 1793, when the elective franchise was granted to the Roman Catholics, and granted too when the Government had the entire option to impose what conditions it thought proper, all the security that it required was an oath. Well, then, by the Act of 1793, the Roman Catholic was admitted to the bar, and no distinction was made between him and his Protestant brethren. The Roman Catholics availed themselves of this permission, still they could not have a silk gown without the required security; so the moment that a man acquired the first business at the bar, he must obtain that security, and then all the secrets of

his private life must be opened and exhibited. In the year 1818 an officer might rise to the highest situation upon the staff, and in the end become commander-in-chief of the forces of the kingdom, and yet no security be required. Well, then, if those who voted with me in 1813 think it now necessary to charge me with having abandoned the securities, I retort the charge upon them, for having given those important offices and those powerful advantages, without asking for the slightest security from those who received them. But all know, and those who adopt this course of argument well know, that those securities are not necessary; and the old story of securities has been now trumped up to cast an odium on those who must have been expected to take a part in this debate—to raise the cry of the country against them—to weaken their influence, and injure their reputation.*

* Mr. Burke, in one of his letters to his son in 1793, on Roman Catholic affairs, prescribes the limit of the securities which it is reasonable for Roman Catholics to give, and for Protestants to require :—

"Why should they (the Roman Catholics) fix barriers and securities to it? Let them leave these to their adversaries. They have nothing to do *but to declare, firmly and simply, that they have no designs whatsoever to alter the ecclesiastical, civil, or political establishment;* but for them to state what degrees of exclusion of themselves from the benefit of the constitution, is necessary to the security of this establishment, or that any exclusion at all is necessary, is really not quite so well considered. I certainly, if I had

I have now to refer to a topic which has been already adverted to by more than one honourable member, and if I touch on it at all, I will at least do so briefly. I perfectly concur in the opinion advanced by some honourable gentlemen, that nothing was, at any time, said or done by Mr. Pitt tantamount to a positive pledge that, when the Union of Ireland and England was effected, the concessions to the Catholics would be yielded. But I am also ready to admit, that there were some *quasi* promises, or conditional intimations, mixed up with the transactions of that period, calculated to excite in the Roman Catholic people a hope, which has unfortunately hitherto proved to be "the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick." I am aware, that at the time of the Union Mr. Pitt was careful to make no promises that could be confounded with positive engagements; but to this fact I cannot shut my eyes, that, directly or indirectly, the Roman Catholics were

all in my power, would give, and far more than now they ask, but leisurely, by degrees, and portion by portion; and this my own settled plan of policy I inculcate as much as I can to others."

To require any security that does not come within the scope of the rule prescribed here, is only to oppose a vexatious barrier to the consummation of this great measure of justice. If an abandonment of any religious opinion or principle, that constitutes a part of a man's conscientious belief be required—it is a surrender that is useless, because it must be insincere; besides, it is a surrender that "not enricheth him who receives," and "that makes him who gives poor indeed."

made to believe—and that belief was a powerful inducement with them to lend their aid towards the accomplishment of the measure—that in the Imperial Parliament the question, which so nearly concerned them, would be more favourably entertained. Some persons professed to doubt whether Mr. Pitt was warm and sincere on the subject of emancipation. I well remember, as well as if it happened only yesterday, Mr. Pitt's showing me a letter from Lord Cornwallis, stating that he thought he might carry the Union, but not Catholic emancipation; in the presumption of youth I exclaimed, "Then abandon the Union!" Mr. Pitt rebuked me as I deserved to be rebuked. He carried the Union; but although he failed in carrying the question of Catholic emancipation, there is no tribunal, however solemn, before which I am not quite prepared to depose to my firm belief in the sincerity of Mr. Pitt's wishes and intentions to carry it. I will further say, that I have myself no knowledge, nor do I believe that any other person had any knowledge of any change in Mr. Pitt's opinion on the subject, with the exception of his determination not to stir it during the life of the late King. "To this extent —no further," was Mr. Pitt's mind altered; and I am confirmed in that opinion by the declaration of a person who knew Mr. Pitt well, the late Marquis of Londonderry, and who, in his place in the House of Commons, voluntarily contradicted

Mr. Rose on the subject, and added to the testimony the fact, "That Mr. Pitt had maintained his opinions respecting the Catholic Question to his dying day." In truth, those who studied the life of Mr. Pitt, and especially all who heard or who read the speech which he made on the Catholic Question in 1805, and who recollected that only five months elapsed before the close of his valuable life, can scarcely believe that a change so rapid had taken place in his sentiments. I, therefore, protest against the truth of the assertion that Mr. Pitt had changed his opinion—an assertion so derogatory to the cause, the advocacy of which I profess, and am proud to inherit from him.

But I have been drawn aside by the name of Mr. Pitt from the main object of my argument; briefly, then, my impression is, that no promise was ever given by that illustrious individual, but that strong intimations were thrown out, which were operative in creating in the breasts of the Catholics a well founded hope that Catholic emancipation would be granted, if the Union were agreed to; and I do firmly believe that many of the Roman Catholics of Ireland pledged themselves to procure that Union, in the anticipation that that measure would be favourable to their just claims—the concession of which was the great object for which they naturally were, at that time, most deeply and anxiously interested.

Now, then, that two-thirds of the representatives of Ireland are advocates for this measure, what is the result of the Union? What! but that this very Union is the great bar to its attainment. No man can doubt that if Ireland had continued a separate kingdom, instead of Catholic emancipation being discussed for the twentieth time in this House, it would have been many years ago completely settled.

And now, Sir, as to another branch—and that the most important one of this great and diversified subject. The pictures which have been drawn of the state of Ireland by gentlemen espousing different sides of the question, are of a nature so appalling, that I think it becomes the duty of the English part of the House of Commons, judging from the statements that have been made by the members of the sister country, to give them the most serious consideration. I trust they will evince a disposition not to throw away a chance of improving the state of that unhappy country. Some words which have fallen from my honourable friend near me (Mr. Dawson), with respect to the course that it would be expedient to pursue in Ireland, were rather of an alarming nature. My honourable friend recommended "firmness and decision." Firmness and decision, Sir, are often good things; but they become either virtues or vices, according to the uses in which they are employed, and the purposes to which they

are directed. I should deeply regret to take them in the unfavourable sense, conveyed in the tone and manner in which the expression reached my ears. I hope I have misinterpreted them; but if I have not, I own I do not envy the hands to which may devolve the task of carrying into effect a system, of which such language, in its unfavourable interpretation, would intimate an approval and a sanction. But, Sir, I hope better things. I hope that the opposition to the honourable baronet's motion is opposition rather than substitution; and that what is intended to be suggested as advisable, is something to tranquillize the feelings of the Irish nation, rather than any thing that might assume a more unseemly character. God grant that it may be so! God grant that the time may arrive, when perfect conciliation may be accomplished. Although I am of opinion, an opinion which I freely avow, that the distaste of the country towards the Catholic cause is stronger than it has been, yet I am as convinced as I can be, with reference to any event in the womb of futurity, that—to the arguments urged in this House—to the repeated discussion of the subject, the opposition to it will at length yield; and that the adoption of a right, equitable, and humane policy towards the Catholics of Ireland, will eventually find an echo in the bosom of every Englishman.

From the speeches which have been addressed

to the House by honourable members from Ireland, I cannot conceive the possibility of that country going on in the way in which it lately has done. Ireland has been sunk to the lowest misery, from the severity of the code that you have given her. Are you prepared to perpetuate that code, which you have already partially relaxed, and for a further relaxation of which she prays? It was a code that kept down the spirit and energy of her people, and doomed them to a degradation for which I know no parallel in history, except in the bondage of the Children of Israel, under the domination of Pharaoh. "*Ecce populus filiorum Israel multus,*" *et fortior nobis est.*

Venite, sapienter opprimamus eum, ne forte multiplicetur, et si ingruerit contra nos bellum, addatur inimicis expugnatisque, nobis egrediatur de terra.

Præposuit itaque eis magistros operum ut affligeret eos oneribus, ædificaveruntque urbes tabernaculorum, Pharaoni Phithon et Rameses.

Quantoque opprimebant eos, tanto magis et crescebat oderatque filios Israel Ægyptii.

*Affligebant illudentes eis, atque ad amaritudinem perducebant vitam eorum operibus luti et lateris, omnique famulatu, quæ in terræ operibus, premebantur.**

* And he (Pharaoh) said unto his people, Behold the people of the children of Israel *are* more, and mightier than we:

Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also

Here is an avowal of the penal code; from the oppressive treatment of the Children of Israel by the Egyptians, has it been copied with the strictest fidelity. Of us, as of the Egyptians, may it be said that we have adopted "*opprimamus*," as a maxim towards the pople of Ireland: although I own I cannot qualify with the epithet, "*sapienter*," the manner in which we have pursued, and the perseverance with which we have continued it.

As to the affidavits which have been read by the honourable member for Derry (Mr. Dawson), I profess neither to believe nor to disbelieve them; but as many affidavits, and documents of every description, have been read to support various opinions, I beg leave to detain the House by reading one, as a specimen of the absurdities that sometimes find their way into these affidavits.—"And this deponent saith, that he (the said A. B.) swore, that he would kick the d——d soul of the said deponent, so that it should fly

unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them out of the land.

Therefore they did set over them task-masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh, treasure cities, Pithon and Raamses.

But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.—*Exod.* chap. i. v. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14.

round h—l like a blue-bottle fly round a treacle barrel:—and which the said deponent verily believes the said A. B. would have done, had he not been prevented."

A charge has been preferred against the Roman Catholic priesthood, by my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel) of which, if I thought them guilty, I know no language sufficiently strong to describe the baseness of their conduct; but I have learnt, from the debates upon this subject in this House, and even on this very night,—not to trust to extravagant accusations. The priests have been accused of garbling the catechism of the Church of England, on a point (the Second Commandment) which went to convict them of idolatry: but I hold in my hand a work of great circulation in the Catholic schools of Ireland, where the Second Commandment is fully set forth.*

* * * * *

* Two points of Mr. Canning's speech, which occurred here, were indistinctly audible in the gallery. The first related to the charge of idolatry preferred against the Roman Catholic clergy, by the omission of the Second Commandment in the Roman Catholic catechism; from which charge Mr. Canning was understood to vindicate them, by reference to catechisms and other books of religious instruction, in general circulation among the Roman Catholics of Ireland. The *second* point related to the following passage in the speech of the Attorney-General for Ireland:

"But let the people of England consider what it is the people of Ireland demand? They claim no fanciful or supposed rights—they claim their just share in the British Constitution; they demand what for 700 years has been in vain demanded—that the Irish

Sir, I have now done my duty to this question. —The present system against the Catholics may be sustained a little longer, and a little longer, from year to year; but speaking of the age of a country, the time of its duration must be short indeed. The motion of the honourable baronet does not, however, call upon those who may still be attached to that system to abandon it,—it is merely a declaration on the part of the House that the state of Ireland, and of the Roman Catholic people, require some consideration from the Legislature. To this proposition it is intended to oppose a direct negative, importing that Par-

shall be sharers in the advantages of English law. Let me ask of the Protestant freemen of England—whom I respect as much as any man in this House, and to whose good sense I address myself—if they were deprived of their undoubted privileges, what would be their feelings, and how vehement would be their reclamations? Is there a man who hears me who would not freely lay down his life in such a cause? I know he would scorn to prove himself so base a recreant from the spirit of his forefathers. Would he not join with all his fellow-sufferers in demanding the restoration of his privileges, and his right to share in making and dispensing the laws of the land? If an attempt were here made to deprive him of his birth-right, it is not idle to say that he and the countless numbers who felt with him, would indeed display the '*ira leonum vincla recusantum.*'"

Mr. Canning defended this passage from the unfavourable interpretation assigned to it by Mr. Peel, who animadverted upon it, as language unfit to be addressed to Englishmen, many of whom (the Dissenters) laboured under greater civil disabilities than the Roman Catholics.

liament does not think the state of Ireland, or the laws affecting the Roman Catholics, deserve consideration. It is upon this vote that the House is about to divide. This resolution goes no farther than to state that the House adopts the opinion of its predecessors, as to the propriety of considering the question—of those predecessors, who sent up to the House of Lords, three bills of relief to the Roman Catholics. By voting with the honourable baronet, I do no more than sanction this proposition; reserving to myself the power of acting or not acting upon it as hereafter I may think proper. On the other hand, if this Resolution be negatived;—if the House of Commons shall decide that the consideration of the state of Ireland is not worthy to be entered upon, then is the House of Commons changed indeed; and I shudder to contemplate the consequences which from such a change may ensue!

[The Right Honourable Gentleman sat down amid loud and general cheering from both sides of the House.]

The House then divided—

For the Motion	272
Against it	276
Majority against it	4

The House adjourned at five o'clock in the morning.

SPEECH ON THE PREMIERSHIP.

MAY 1st, 1827.

On the motion that a new writ be ordered for a member to serve in the present Parliament, for the borough of Ashburton, in the room of the Right Honourable W. S. Bourne, who had accepted the office of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department,

Mr. Peel rose and said—

Sir—As the motion that has just been made is most immediately connected with the accession of a right honourable gentleman to an office which I recently held, I trust the House will not think I am preferring an unreasonable request if I intreat them to allow me to offer some explanation as to the grounds on which I thought myself compelled to retire from the service of His Majesty. I know very well how much of personal matter must necessarily be mixed up with an explanation of this kind; but as I have so frequently, under other circumstances, experienced the kind consideration and indulgence of the House, I should be much disappointed if I should be deceived in the expectation that they will continue that indulgence, and will allow me to take this opportunity of fully explaining the reasons of my conduct. In that expectation I have abstained from resorting to any other mode of making public the motives which have influenced me in the course I have adopted.

* * * *

Under the delay which has taken place,* I have been supported by the hope, too, that I should be able to vindicate myself from the unfavourable constructions that might have been put upon my conduct in consequence of my silence, and to show that the course which I had pursued was that which the necessity of my situation absolutely required. I say, Sir, vindicate the course I have pursued; because I do avow, that I think public men, who are embarked in the public service, have no right, upon light and insufficient grounds, to sever their connection with the State, and to disembark from that service into which they have entered.

If, Sir, I had acted in consequence of levity, of disappointed ambition, of personal pique, or opposition towards a rival, I should feel that I was, though not constitutionally, yet morally responsible; and that I should have shown by such conduct, I was unworthy of the confidence with which my Sovereign had honoured me. But, Sir, I acted from none of those motives: they did not form the grounds on which I retired from the public service. I acted solely upon principles which I had frequently professed, and which I considered to form part of my public character.

For a space of eighteen years I have pursued one undeviating course of conduct, offering, during the whole of that time, an uncompromising, but a temperate, a fair, and, as I believe, a constitutional resistance to the making of any further concessions to the Roman Catholics. During fourteen out of those eighteen years, I have held office; and during eleven of those years I have been closely connected

* The Easter recess intervened between the appointment of Mr. Canning to the office of Prime Minister, and the opportunity of offering this explanation to Parliament of the grounds of Mr. Peel's retirement.—EDITOR.

in office with that country most interested in the decision of those claims. The opinions which I held during that time I still retain; and I thought, from having always avowed those opinions, but, above all, from having, while in office, taken an active, and I may, perhaps, say, important part against the claims of the Catholics, that I could not remain in office after events had rendered it probable that I should be the single Minister of the Crown who was likely to continue opposed to them.

I say, Sir, under these circumstances I did not feel that it would be consistent with the career I had hitherto pursued, and with the maintenance of my own character as a public man, to acquiesce in arrangements which would benefit myself by enabling me to retain office, which, however, I could not do without acting in a manner calculated materially to promote the successful termination of a question, to which, under other circumstances, and in other aspects of political affairs, I had offered the most decided resistance. Under these circumstances, and with respect to the nature of the opposition which I had always offered to the proposed concessions to the Roman Catholics, I felt myself bound to act as I have done.

Sir, the nature of that opposition was such as to allow of no middle course; it was founded upon the belief which I have always sincerely entertained, that the removal of those barriers, which the law opposed to the attainment of political power by the Roman Catholics, was inconsistent with the maintenance of the Constitution, and with the welfare and safety of the Church.

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The circumstances to which I have referred I considered seriously; and having done so, I made up my mind to retire from office, if my right honourable friend, (Mr. Canning), whose opinions on this subject were so decidedly opposed to my own, should be placed at the head of the Administration,

where he could with more effect than ever support these opinions. If my own had been doubtful, my duty might not have required my resignation; but they were not, and my rigid sense of public duty has determined my course.

If even the Administration could have remained in the same state as before—if it could have continued exactly neutral upon this question, I might have continued in office; but when I saw that exact neutrality could not be expected—when I found that the Duke of York was no more, and that the voice of the Earl of Liverpool had become silent, I thought I had a right to act, and, indeed, that I ought to act upon the conviction of my own mind, and not subject myself to suspicions, by seeming to have been converted to opposite opinions, especially when the period of that apparent conversion would have concurred precisely with that of the change of Administration. I therefore determined to sacrifice office, rather than abandon that course which I had previously pursued for so long a time, and which I had continued while in possession of the office which I lately held.

The next question upon which I wish to say a few words is, whether the appointment of my right honourable friend to be at the head of the Administration, and to occupy that place which was recently filled by the Earl of Liverpool, would not almost necessarily bring along with it the final success of the Catholic Question.

It is due to my right honourable friend to say—and I give him full credit for it—that I believe him to be actuated by the utmost honesty, sincerity, and zeal, in his efforts for the promotion of the success of that question. I judge him in the same manner as I wish to be judged myself—by the uniform course he has pursued, by the public declarations he has so frequently made, and by the earnestness he has always manifested on this subject. I am perfectly satisfied,

I say, with his honesty, sincerity, and zeal; and I declare that it will be as much his duty, as I believe it always was his intention, if he should be placed at the head of the Administration, to promote, by every fair means, if not the immediate, at least the ultimate success of the Catholic Question.

Feeling so, I thought it was my duty to retire; I thought so not merely because my right honourable friend differed from myself in opinion upon the merits of the Catholic Question, but because the change consequent upon his appointment was such, that there could not be any thing less than a complete transfer of all the influence and power which belong (and I think properly belong) to the office of Prime Minister, from the opponents to the advocates of concessions to the Catholics. That transfer, Sir, was not a transfer of influence and power from one ordinary man to another ordinary man, but from the most powerful opponent of the Catholic claims to their most powerful advocate. Under these circumstances, and with reference to that Question, I thought it would be impossible to conduct the Government upon those principles on which it had been carried on under the Earl of Liverpool; and the consequence was, that I prepared to act upon that resolution, which, from the delay that has taken place upon Lord Liverpool's illness, I had had a full opportunity of considering, and which I had maturely deliberated. I had marked throughout, the splendid career which my right honourable friend had pursued with regard to the Catholic Question, and each hour of my deliberation confirmed the opinion I had formed, that he would employ the influence of his new office to promote the success of that Question which he had always so warmly advocated. I found that from the very first period when the restrictions imposed by the Regency Bill upon his present Majesty terminated, up to the month

of March last, when the honourable baronet, the member for Westminster (Sir F. Burdett) brought forward his motion regarding the Catholics, he had pursued the same active and undeviating course in promotion of the Catholic Question, which I (though not with the same ability and power) pursued in opposition to it. In the year 1812, after Mr. Grattan had introduced his motion for the immediate consideration of the Roman Catholic claims, which motion was negatived, my right honourable friend was not satisfied with that negative, but brought forward another motion to the same effect as Mr. Grattan's, alleging, as his reason for doing so, that circumstances had been changed, as the restrictions on the Regency had then expired. That motion went to pledge the House to take the state of the Catholics into immediate consideration on the commencement of the next session, and it was adopted by the House.

Now, Sir, I ask, what is there to prevent my right honourable friend, if he thought the course he then pursued was prudent and reasonable, and would be so at this moment, I say what is to prevent him from pursuing the same course in 1827, which he adopted in 1812? In that year Mr. Grattan's motion was negatived by a majority of 40, but my right honourable friend, not at all dispirited by that defeat, introduced a motion to the same effect, but in a different shape, pledging the House to a consideration of the question in the following session. One discussion has already taken place this session upon this question, on the motion of the honourable member for Westminster; that motion has been negatived, but the circumstances being pretty nearly the same, I see no ground on which my right honourable friend should feel himself debarred from now pursuing the same course which he adopted on the rejection of Mr. Grattan's motion. If I had continued in office, I

could never have thought of proposing to my right honourable friend that he should pledge himself not to adopt that course, though even if I had been by any chance induced to do so, I am sure, from the course he has always pursued, and from my conviction of the honesty and integrity of his conduct upon this question, he would at once have refused to give any such pledge. I say, therefore, that I was justified in accounting it at least possible, if not probable, that in this very session a motion might be introduced by my right honourable friend upon the subject of the Catholic claims, and that I might, in this session or the next, be called on, as a member of the Government, to acquiesce in a measure introduced by my right honourable friend, which, when it was introduced by the honourable member for Westminster, I had positively rejected. During the whole period from the year 1812 to the year 1827, my right honourable friend has, on every occasion, preserved his consistency upon this point, and in the declaration of his opinions, in his professions, and in his acts, has uniformly given to the claims of the Catholics his most decided, powerful, and effectual support. Not only has he supported them when the question has been brought forward by others, but he has himself originated motions for conceding at least a portion of the claims demanded by the Roman Catholics; motions, however, that, though limited in the extent of their immediate operation, yet involved principles which, if he thought good for a part, he must, by necessary consequence, have considered good for the whole.

The right honourable gentleman next adverted to a motion introduced in 1822 by Mr. Canning, for the admission of the Roman Catholic peers to seats in Parliament. On that occasion his right honourable friend said, "I solemnly declare to the House that I would not have brought this question forward, had I not felt assured that

the reparation which I ask on behalf of the Catholic peers is in the name of policy as expedient as in the name of humanity it is charitable, and in the name of God just."

Now, I say, Sir, (continued Mr. Peel), if that be a true description of my right honourable friend's opinion—if he now believes, as he then stated, that the claims of the Catholics are in policy expedient, in humanity charitable, and, above all, in the name of God, just—with my confidence in his sincerity, how could I doubt, that placed in the situation which he now fills, had I remained in office, I should have been called on, and that very shortly, to adopt the alternative of either acquiescing in a motion not now for the first time brought forward, or of opposing myself to the strength of the Government? and that acquiescence could not have been yielded by me without involving the whole of those principles which I have hitherto endeavoured to maintain. Sir, that such a motion as that which I have supposed, would involve the whole principle of the Catholic Question, I may assert upon the authority of my right honourable friend himself, who said that he could not conclude his speech on that motion, without admitting that the partial success which he was then attempting to obtain for the Catholics, would, he hoped, ultimately lead to the attainment of the great object they had then in view. Now, Sir, it would not be my part to acquiesce in the attainment of such an object; and if I had remained in office, it would not have been in my power to prevent any, even partial concessions, which might be introduced into Parliament by the first Minister of the Crown—by that individual who is honoured with the chief confidence of his Sovereign, who is mainly responsible for the acts of the Administration, and who is first in influence and authority in the Cabinet. I could not say, I have acquiesced in granting to the Catholics the whole of what

they claim, nor in any partial concession of the nature to which I have alluded, attended, as it must have been, with such consequences as my right honourable friend himself at that time predicted. I should therefore have held office only on sufferance, liable to be called on at the notice of a week to retire from the public service, and that, too, perhaps at a time infinitely more inconvenient for the public than that at which I actually did resign the department that had been intrusted to me.

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On the occasion of Mr. Stuart Wortley's motion, on the 21st of May, 1812, for the formation of a new and efficient Administration, my right honourable friend assumed grounds for declining to form part of the Administration, which I consider so nearly similar to those on which I have now retired from the public service, that I think I cannot do better than state them; and I beg therefore to make use of them, not only as applying particularly to my own situation, but as conveying, in better language than my own, the description of the grounds on which I have thought myself called upon to secede:—

"I have been asked whether, supposing I had accepted the offer that was made to me, I should not have felt myself at perfect liberty to act as my own opinions should dictate, upon the great question which constitutes the main bar of separation. I reply, that as a Minister, I know I should have been at liberty. I do not mean to assert, that if I had joined the present Administration to fight against my own principles, under the banners of the noble lord (Lord Liverpool), I should not still have had the power of making my solitary speech, and of giving my solitary vote in support of opinions I had previously maintained—I will not even say that there may not be honourable minds who would be satisfied with such a distinction, and it may be

my misfortune or my fault that mine is not a mind of that construction. If, when out of office, I have lent to any cause that I deemed just, my influence and my authority, I never can consent to accept office under the condition that I shall instantly divest myself of that influence and authority, which ought still to be my companions, and to leave them on one great and vital question in open and wilful abeyance."

The justice of these sentiments no man can deny, and all must admire; and I believe my right honourable friends, like myself, were fully satisfied of their sincerity. He will now use, and no man can reasonably blame him for using, the influence and authority of the station he now fills, for the purpose of carrying that cause he has so long advocated in vain, and which out of office he declared to be just.

Almost every word then uttered by my right honourable friend upon this point applies exactly to my case; and a little further on he observes, "Personal objections to the noble lord I declare I have none." So I, in my turn, assert, from the bottom of my heart, that I have no personal objections to my right honourable friend. I on this occasion, like him on that, "am actuated by no feeling of rivalry," and willingly acquiesced in the retention of his services, when he was about to sail for India.

In attending His Majesty to Scotland, I closed my lips on the subject; and on the first day after my return to London, I waited on my noble friend at the head of the Government, and said, that if His Majesty, or my colleagues, deemed it of importance that my right honourable friend should hold the situations he has since filled, difficulties I would make none. That question, therefore, I decided four years ago, and I repeat, in his words, that I have been "actuated by no feeling of rivalry;" and with

this particular question excepted, I could have no earthly hesitation either in acting with or under him." I too cannot allow "the predominance of his opinion to stifle mine;" and on entering the Cabinet under such circumstances, I cannot pretend not to know that his "influence and authority" will be such as to paralyse all my feeble efforts in opposition to the object of his wishes. If I accepted office under him, let it be remembered that I must accept it with full notice of what were his views of the duties of a Prime Minister, invested with the influence and authority he will enjoy. In the course I have pursued, then, I have only acted in accordance with his example—an example I honour, and an example that ought to be set or followed by every public man.

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But, Sir, the peculiarity of my situation depends not merely upon the opinions I have avowed, not merely on the nature of the resistance I have offered to the Catholic claims, not merely on the prominence of the part I have taken on that question, but on the fact, that for the last eleven or twelve years I have held two situations intermixing me with the administration of every Irish question. On me has devolved the whole responsibility, whether as Chief Secretary for Ireland, or as Secretary of State for the Home Department. The relation in which I stood to the Prime Minister, from the nature of the office I lately held, I knew presented what I may venture to term an insuperable difficulty. Being now in the ranks of private life, and under no restraint of official reserve, I must fairly state that, for a long period, I only have been considered responsible for the affairs of Ireland. I was the only Minister of the Crown in this House who took the view I entertained of the Catholic Question; and I have been thus placed in a situation, not only of difficulty and embarrass-

ment, but in a situation in which, let me say, no Minister ought to be placed.

In the beginning of the year 1822 (a distinction certainly unsought and unsolicited on my part), I was appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department, with full notice, I admit, of the difficulties I might thereafter have to combat. If I retained office, it was not from personal motives, or from any desire of the distinction conferred; and, in 1825, after I had been left in minorities on three different questions immediately connected with Ireland—the Catholic Question, the Elective Franchise, and the Payment of the Catholic Clergy (which I thought something very like the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland)—I waited on my noble friend, then at the head of the Government. I told him that, personally, it was painful for me to disconnect myself from those whom I esteemed and respected; but that, having been left in a minority in that branch of the Legislature of which I was a member, I anxiously desired to be relieved from my situation. The reply of my noble friend was, that my retirement would determine his own, and I finally consented to remain in office; my noble friend declaring that he deemed it of the highest importance that the Secretary of State for the Home Department should possess opinions as much as possible in accordance with those of the Prime Minister. He represented to me the difficulty he should experience in filling up the situation, and, in short, that my retirement must determine his own. I was thus induced to waive my wish for retirement, and to consent to remain until a new Parliament had pronounced an opinion upon the great question which interests and agitates Ireland.

When last I addressed the House on that subject, on the Resolution of the right honourable baronet (Sir Francis Burdett), I expected to have been again in a minority;

and had that expectation been realized I should then have withdrawn from the service of His Majesty. Although I prefer no complaint, for I have always been treated with the most perfect good faith, yet it was no enviable situation at any time to be the single Minister in this House, responsible for the administration of the affairs of Ireland —opposed by all my colleagues, and daily seeing those very colleagues, the members of the Government, actively concerting measures with my political opponents. They were at perfect liberty to do so; for it was understood that every man might exert himself, either in opposition to, or in promotion of, the Roman Catholic claims. I make no complaint; I prefer no charge on this account; I only state the fact as the reason which made my situation extremely embarrassing. The support and assistance I received from my noble friend, Lord Liverpool, certainly rendered my difficulties less; but if, in the place of him, with whom I cordially concurred—with whom I entered into public life —and between whom and myself there never was a shadow of difference of opinion upon any subject: if I say, in his place, I should find my right honourable friend, with whom I had the misfortune at all times to differ upon that paramount question, it is obvious that it was impossible for me to retain the particular situation I held, that of Secretary for the Home Department, connected as it was with the office of Prime Minister. Is there an honourable gentleman who hears me, who does not feel that if it were impossible for me to retain that situation, it was as impossible for me to be guilty of the paltry subterfuge of removing to another. I am perfectly satisfied all will be convinced that I took the only course remaining to me; and that after the misfortune which befel my noble friend, Lord Liverpool, I had no alternative but to retire.

The relation between the offices of Secretary for the Home Department and Prime Minister, is more intimate

than is perhaps generally supposed. Not only do all Irish affairs pass through the hands of the Home Secretary, but his connection with the Prime Minister is this—the Prime Minister has the disposal of all the patronage of Government, while the Home Secretary is the Minister who is legally and constitutionally responsible. Every place of preferment in the church, every political office, is disposed of by the Prime Minister; but the signature of the Secretary of State for the Home Department is indispensable to every instrument. Such being the fact, it becomes a matter of great importance in what manner this office is filled. He who is charged with the domestic government of this country, ought not to be an individual materially differing in opinion from the head of the Administration. If this accordance do not exist, the Home Secretary can only retire, or come into painful collision with his coadjutor on individual appointments—a condition most sincerely to be deprecated—leaving him no alternative, but to withdraw from office upon some single, isolated point, the true grounds of which the country at large would never be able to understand and appreciate. It was my duty, therefore, to consider all these points, beforehand; and if I felt that such collision would arise, it was my duty to prevent it by retirement, without running the risk of embarrassing the public service by adherence to office. These are the public grounds on which—with reference to my position regarding the Catholic Question—with a view to my position as Secretary of State for the Home Department, charged with the domestic administration of the affairs of Ireland—I thought it impossible to retain office under a Prime Minister differing from me in so marked a degree upon a question of such magnitude. Acting upon these grounds, with great reluctance, but at the same time without a moment's hesitation, I signified to His Majesty my determination.

Whether the House deems those grounds sufficient, is a

matter, give me leave to say, of subordinate consideration to the question whether, having intended to retire, I acted upon that intention in conformity with public good faith, and with the respect I owed to the Sovereign who had honoured me with his confidence. I would much rather it should be thought that I acted precipitately, and upon insufficient grounds, than that I had been guilty of neglect of duty to my country, and of want of respect to my Sovereign. The course I pursued was this: I felt my own situation to be one of difficulty, and I wished to influence the opinion and conduct of no man. The first person to whom I communicated my opinion, that I should not be able to concur in the new arrangement, was my right honourable friend, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I mentioned my intention to retire, to him, and to no other, and I knew not the intention of any other man. I acted on the sense of my own situation. The moment the subject was mentioned to me, I thought that it did not become me to act with any reserve; and having made up my mind, not to require that my answer should be postponed until the question had been formally and officially put. This, I am sure, my right honourable friend will do me the justice to admit. The 29th of March was the first occasion on which the subject was introduced, and I then said to my right honourable friend, "I will tell you, without reserve, what are my feelings as to my particular situation: they dictate to me retirement from office, if His Majesty should select you to form an Administration." I am sure he will recollect that I made this statement, without any breach of that good understanding which has long subsisted between us. That information I took care to convey to the highest quarter; for here again I thought that there should be no reserve. My resolution was not sudden—I acted upon long previous conviction. The step I took was in no respect

precipitate, and no one ought to have been taken by surprise by it. Decorum was due to the painful situation of Lord Liverpool; and after what delicacy required was at an end, and the matter was formally discussed, I took care that no doubt should remain as to the line of conduct I intended to pursue. I felt a sincere desire, I admit, to remain connected with the late Administration; and I stated, that if any arrangement could be made, so as to place the Government on the same footing as when it was under the guidance of Lord Liverpool, I was satisfied with my situation, and wished for no change nor advancement.

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The right honourable gentleman proceeded to vindicate his late colleagues, who retired from office with him, from the charge of concert and cabal. He did not wish his case to be separated from theirs. Their conduct, as well as his own, proceeded from their impressions and views of duty to the public service; and although their course was accidentally coincident in point of time; in point of fact, there was no concert whatsoever amongst them. To one of his colleagues, he (Mr. Peel) by command of His Majesty did communicate the course he felt bound to pursue, but he did not inquire, or know, what course that colleague intended to pursue. With the exception of the single communication made in the manner in which he had stated, such was the reserve and delicacy observed by every member of the late Government, that he did not believe that any one man was acquainted with the course another meant to adopt.

The right honourable gentleman then continued, "I cannot conclude, Sir, a statement of the public grounds on which I am compelled to retire from office, without expressing deep regret at my separation from many with whom I have formerly acted with so much cordiality. That regret is nevertheless mitigated by the reflection, that I did every thing becoming my character to prevent that sepa-

ration. Personally, too, I may lament that I shall not continue possessed of the opportunities my office afforded of making those changes, and introducing those improvements, from the adoption of which only I hoped for distinction and reward.

"I cannot but feel concern at my withdrawal from the service of my Sovereign, and that withdrawal is the more painful from the uniform kindness and gracious consideration with which His Majesty was graciously pleased to contemplate my labours, and my solicitude for the public welfare.

"I have the satisfaction of reflecting that every institution, civil and military, connected with my office, during the last five years, has been subjected to close inspection and strict review, and that I have been able to make such temperate and gradual reforms, as I thought were consistent with their general and permanent good. I have also the gratification of knowing that every law found in the statute-book when I entered office, which imposed any temporary, or any extraordinary restriction on the liberty of the subject, has either been repealed or allowed to expire. I may be a Tory—I may be illiberal—but the fact is undeniable, that when I first entered upon the duties of the Home Department, there were laws in existence which imposed upon the subjects of this realm unusual and extraordinary restrictions: the fact is undeniable, that those laws have been effaced.

"Tory as I am, I have the further satisfaction of knowing, that there is not a single law connected with my name, which has not had for its object some mitigation of the severity of the Criminal Law—some prevention of abuse in the exercise of it, or some security for its impartial administration. I may also recollect with pleasure, that during the severest trials to which the manufacturing interests have ever been exposed during the winters of the last two years, I have preserved internal tranquillity without applying

to the House for measures of extraordinary severity. I hope it will not be considered unbecoming if I allude further to the satisfaction I derive from reflecting upon my exertions in favour of the just prerogative of the Crown.

"For all the ancient institutions of my country I have felt a natural prepossession, and an earnest desire that they should preserve that veneration which has promoted their continuance; but those prepossessions have not prevented me from inquiring into cases of alleged abuse, and that desire has urged me in a friendly and temperate spirit, to examine to what degree corruption may have intruded. Where change and restoration were deemed necessary, they have been applied, thus recommending those ancient institutions to the long-enduring attachment and veneration of the country.

"I again thank the House for the opportunity it has afforded me of giving this explanation, and I shall conclude by assuring it that the confidence of my Sovereign, the good-will of his people, and the approbation of Parliament, have been at once the motive, and the reward of my exertions."

Mr. Duncombe (of York) approved of the conduct of Mr. Peel throughout the late negociations.

Sir Francis Burdett said, that the very same feelings which had compelled the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Peel) to retire, upon the Catholic Question, a question of the highest importance;—a question which involved no less an interest than that of the great cause of general religious freedom in Great Britain;—a question, the principles favourable to the support of which he thought were actually identified with the first principles of the British Constitution; principles, which in themselves were not only sanctioned by the common law of nature, but by every consideration of policy and reason, and which were gaining

ground more and more from day to day in every other kingdom in the civilized world, though they still were, or had been, by some miraculous fatality, resisted in England; the very same feelings which had influenced the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Peel) to withdraw his assistance from His Majesty's Government as soon as he saw that great question was likely to be determined in a manner, in his opinion, contrary to the interests of the state, left him (Sir F. Burdett), whose views upon that particular measure were directly opposite to those of the right honourable gentleman, no choice but to give that Government every support and assistance in his power. His feelings had been excited just as completely as those of the right honourable gentleman by the present crisis, only in a different way. He had looked at the present opportunity as the only practical one which had arisen during his political life, for advocating, and as the right honourable gentleman had truly said, of advancing that question, upon the fortunate issue of which, in his opinion, the prosperity, and probably the safety of this country depended. It was a dawn of hope which was breaking upon the benighted prospects of Ireland, and which it was to be trusted would have the effect of tranquillizing that unhappy kingdom, until the people of England should become so far enlightened as to perceive that her misfortunes formed a constant stumbling-block to their own advantage. For himself, he might say it most sincerely, no person was more inclined to give credit to the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Peel) for his exertions in office, than he (Sir F. Burdett) was, or more regretted that he could no longer continue to carry on those measures for the benefit of his country, which he undoubtedly had the merit of having originated; yet it was to be hoped that, even out of office, he would not entirely abandon them.

The motives upon which the right honourable gentleman had withdrawn, were honourable to him in the highest degree; but still it was a benefit, and a most important benefit to the country, that he had been compelled to withdraw. That any thing—no matter what—had obliged him to give up a situation in which he was no doubt of great utility to the country, but in which he presented a constant barrier to the alteration of a state of affairs and politics in Ireland, which scarcely six men in England were hardy enough to say could be allowed to remain in their present ruinous condition. In his own conscientious opinion, he should desert his duty to those principles which might by care and conduct be so guided as in their course to produce neither danger nor mischief, but great good;—principles, the progress of which no power that could be exerted would be able eventually to stop or check,—if he failed to throw all his weight into the scale of the present arrangement. And, besides, he was a practical man, or at least wished to be so. He was ready to go as far as any man for abstract principle, but he would not quite lose sight of present advantage. If he could not at once obtain all that he desired or was entitled to, still that which he saw he could obtain he would not reject. In acting as he had done on the present occasion, he conceived he had done no more than give his support to the Crown in the exercise of its undoubted prerogative; and in a case where he had no reason to doubt but that prerogative was employed for the public welfare.

Sir Thomas Lethbridge coincided in the opinions of Mr. Peel, and approved of the consistency and integrity of his conduct on this occasion. He would ask the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) at the head of the Government directly—was there to be a Cabinet united upon the subject of Catholic emancipation? or was it to be

one made of jarring materials and opinions, to be forced down and settled as circumstances should make necessary, or convenience admit?

Mr. G. Dawson said, that in all the support which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) had received, there was no other feeling or sentiment manifested than a desire to participate in the power and places which the right honourable gentleman had to dispense. He had resigned his place for the same reasons, and on the same principles as his right honourable friend (Mr. Peel). With respect to the support given by the honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett), and the former members of the opposition to the present Administration, if it was not with the immediate view of carrying the Catholic Question, he would say that their coalition with the right honourable gentleman was one of the basest and most unnatural, which political experience could enumerate. He repeated he knew no instance of a more base coalition, if the case were such as he believed, and he would put the fact upon a very short and simple test:—Was Catholic emancipation, he would ask the right honourable gentleman, or was it not to be made a Cabinet question? If there was the slightest suspense as to the Catholic Question—if there was a hesitation as to the making that question a Cabinet question, it became impossible for those gentlemen who now supported the right honourable gentleman, conscientiously and consistently to do so. After animadverting on the press, and asserting that it was corrupted to its core, the honourable gentleman proceeded,—to contend that the present Administration was so constructed as neither to please the Catholics nor Protestants. What would the Catholics of Ireland say when they saw the Cabinet composed principally of their advocates—yet their question was not made a Cabinet one? And what would the Protestants say who heard it

declared that the intention of their Sovereign had been that there should be a Protestant Cabinet, and found the Protestant interests entrusted to such hands as those of Lord Bexley? Lord Lyndhurst, indeed, had lately made a speech, for the whole materials of which he had been indebted to Doctor Philpotts; but the Protestants of Ireland would have little confidence in such support as that of Lord Lyndhurst, especially as he had ranged himself under the banners of such opinions as those proffered by the right honourable the First Lord of the Treasury. The honourable member proceeded to advert to what he asserted was an avowed and well known opposition between the King and his present Prime Minister on this important question. At all events the right honourable gentleman ought to explain himself fully and openly as to what were the intentions of his Government. The honourable baronet (Sir F. Burdett), who preceded him, had said that the safety of the country depended upon the new ministerial arrangements. He (Mr. Dawson) would say that if the Irish Catholics were to be deluded any more with the expectation of ministerial support, Ministers would make themselves answerable for every calamity which could afflict that country in future.

Mr. Brougham next rose.—The late honourable Under Secretary for the Home Department (Mr. Dawson) had appealed to him personally, and it seemed to be the opinion of that honourable gentleman, that considering the principles which had hitherto been supposed to guide the Government, no other earthly motive could be discovered in his conduct, except the desire to participate in the emoluments of that patronage and influence which were now placed at the disposal of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning). To him (Mr. B.) the remarks of the honourable gentleman had no application. He had never dreamt of taking office under the present arrangement. He was more removed from the

probability of office, or from the contemplation of it, (if possible,) than the honourable gentleman himself. Government was to be supported, according to the honourable gentleman, by what he called an unnatural coalition or alliance, struck up between the right honourable gentleman and his friends, who stood with respect to each other on varying principles, engaged in opposing doctrines and views totally different. He (Mr. Brougham) forsooth, had been opposed to the opinions advanced by the Government, since the death of Lord Castlereagh, as to our foreign policy. He (Mr. B.) forsooth, had been anxious to attach to the wheels of the Holy Alliance, the triumphant chariot of the British fortunes. Then it must be assumed that he had been one of the most zealous and illiberal impugners of that policy which had been introduced into the mercantile affairs of the country, by the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Huskisson). He had also been at war, as it must be assumed, with the Government, or the chief members of it, on the policy which was most fitting to preserve in content and tranquillity the sister kingdom of Ireland. Let the House look on all the great political questions upon which he and his friends had approximated to, and differed from the Government, and they would soon discover which was most frequently in accordance with it, himself, or the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) who had made the attack upon him. Let the House consider what had been his conduct towards Ministers, in respect to the policy of Europe; or let them throw their eye across the Atlantic, where the dawn of freedom in South America had made the hearts of thousands leap for joy, while blessing with its aspect myriads here who sympathized with them. Then, as to the agricultural interests, had not he (Mr. Brougham) given his support to the right honourable gentleman, though the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson)

sat voting by his side. These were the questions, these were the interests to which he had given his support. He had passed them in review, that the House might see that he had given his support to the right honourable gentleman, because he believed him to be practically animating the councils of Government on those subjects, with a voice which found in his (Mr. B.'s) breast, a faithful echo. But were there no questions on which the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) and his friends, differed from the right honourable gentleman? Had not the country of late been accustomed to a Cabinet almost wholly discordant, differing among each other—

"Wide as the Poles asunder?"

Had they not seen one Secretary of State directly opposed to the speeches and votes of another Secretary of State. Whilst alluding to this painful subject—the Catholic Question—he felt bound to do justice to the manly, and to the country, highly satisfactory conduct of the right honourable gentleman, the late Chief Secretary for the Home Department. But they had heard even from that right honourable gentleman that things were on such a footing in the Cabinet that he himself had the intention of retiring a year or two ago. When he (Mr. B.) saw that state of things, he was for some time prevented and barred from executing his own wishes in favour of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning), because he felt that the Government was composed in a manner which offered little satisfaction to the contemplation of thinking men. That impediment, however, was removed by the retirement from office of those who were most opposed to any change. In reference to the resignation of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Peel) he would say, that as a Minister he had shown himself to be above all exception, and in his resignation he

had placed himself above any suspicion which could be suggested by the utmost ingenuity of malice, were it possible for any person to be his enemy. With respect to the Catholic Question, he for one did not look at the Catholic Question as a Cabinet Question, or one that was likely to be made a Cabinet Question. He looked to saving it from the certainty of defeat, by remodelling the Cabinet, in a manner which must in any event bring good to Ireland.

As to the Catholic Question itself, if pursued prudently, discreetly, and practically, with a full witness of all the difficulties standing in the way, and accumulating around their steps as they arrived nearer the destined goal—for however cautious the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) had been in the choice of terms, he had been sufficiently plain to be understood—there was greater reason to hope now than ever. But wishing Ireland, including Catholics and Protestants, honestly well, he must hold that man to be an enemy to the advocates of the Catholics, both in and out of the House, who would attempt to press the question forward at this critical moment. Let not the Catholics press it—let them not do that which would give most pleasure to their bitter enemies. The honourable and learned gentleman proceeded to advert to the speech of the honourable baronet (Sir T. Lethbridge) who occupied the place of leader of the opposition, and whose appearance in that situation, he (Mr. B.) should be inclined to call grotesque, were it not for the great personal regard which he entertained towards him. As it was the custom to talk of sacrifices, he might be permitted to say for himself that he had quitted a situation* eminent beyond his hopes or merits on the opposite benches, where he was surrounded, he might almost say followed, from the respect

* Leader of the Opposition.

shown to his humble abilities, by one of the largest, the most honourable, and he could add, because he knew their motives, being privy to their councils, one of the most disinterested oppositions ever known in that House; an opposition consisting of men who did what they sincerely thought best for their country, though, in doing so, they felt sure they were helping to confirm their adversaries in office. He had quitted that station, enough to satisfy the ambition of the proudest man, under arrangements which had made his own acceptance of office impossible. His opinions on foreign and domestic policy had led him to take this step with the sincere desire of furnishing a useful assistance to the liberal sentiments of the right honourable gentleman, including in the particular objects of his charge the Irish Question, which was likely to be promoted by it. Not that he was for giving it that prominent situation in the public councils which was required by the honourable baronet; but he wished that it should derive every possible advantage from the junction of the two parties which had divided the House and the country.

Mr. Canning rose for the first time as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and spoke to the following effect:—

Sir,—It would be uncourteous to the House, and to my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel), were I to allow this debate to close without expressing the sentiments which his speech has excited, or rather confirmed, in my mind; and at the same time that I rise for the express purpose of doing so;—as there have been calls made on me to answer questions on different subjects, I am pre-

pared, in the discharge of my duty, to answer those questions. To begin with the more agreeable part of my task, the speech of my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel) who has, in one or two instances, appealed to my testimony for the confirmation of some parts of his narrative of his own conduct. I confirm them in the fullest degree. I can bear testimony that, throughout the whole of the discussions that have taken place since Parliament adjourned, I have kept up with my right honourable friend the most constant intercourse—that throughout I have found in him the same candour and sincerity—the expression of the same just feelings, and the uniform exhibition of the same high principle, to which he has laid claim in the speech which he has this night delivered.

I assure the House that they much mistake the position in which I have the honour to stand, who believe that position to be one of gratified ambition, or of unalloyed satisfaction. From the beginning of these discussions, I foresaw—both of us foresaw—that they must terminate in our mutual separation. Would to God—that separation may be but for a time! Had the question been merely between my right honourable friend and myself, and had it been to be decided by his retirement or by mine, I do most solemnly declare it should have been decided by the latter. Sir, my right honourable friend had the courtesy to state to me yesterday his intention of making some observa-

tions to the House on the present occasion. I had, therefore, the opportunity of doing that without which I should never have been able to address the House with satisfaction to myself—of asking the gracious permission of the King to state such circumstances concerning His Majesty in the late discussions, as might be necessary to explain my conduct. I know not whether the House will be surprised to hear—my right honourable friend will not, for I have already stated it to him—that when I was first called upon by His Majesty for advice, in the critical situation in which the Government was placed, aware—for why should I disguise the fact?—of His Majesty's individual opinions, I counselled him to make the Government conformable to those opinions. To carry that counsel into effect, would of course have involved the necessity of my retirement from office; and I can declare most conscientiously that I would have laid at the feet of my Sovereign the situation I had the honour to hold, with a more cheerful heart, and with much more confidence, with respect to my future position apart from the Government, than with respect to what it could be with the question differently settled.

But, Sir, it was not for me to offer advice to my Sovereign as to the mode by which he was to accomplish the formation of a Cabinet opposed to my own opinions; all, therefore, that remained for me to do was to ask leave to retire, and make

way, as far as I was concerned, for its formation. Now, why did I do this? Why did I, who have hitherto differed from many of my late colleagues upon this question, and who, as has been truly observed, thus differing, still continued to act with them—why did I thus stake the existence of an Administration, even though divided on the subject of the Catholic Claims, and advise His Majesty to form an Administration wholly hostile to those claims?

I will state my reasons briefly for that course.

Not many months ago His Majesty received a letter, from a source which I will not name, most strenuously advising His Majesty to place the Government of the country in a state of uniformity, and that that uniformity should be one of a decided opposition to the Catholic claims. Lord Liverpool, to whom this advice was communicated, at the same time that it was addressed to His Majesty, in a letter to His Majesty, stated first, that having been one of the authors of a Government divided in opinion upon that question, he, for one, never would belong to an Administration which should be formed on the principle of the exclusion of its advocates. Lord Liverpool added his opinion of the great difficulty there would be in the forming of such a Government. Such was Lord Liverpool's opinion; but when I advised His Majesty to form such a Government, it was not for me to estimate the difficulties which would impede it. It was, had His Majesty

thought fit to adopt the advice, for those of his counsellors who were to form part of an Administration so constituted, to counsel such a course as they might have thought would attain their end. I did not disguise from my Sovereign that I thought it would be a work of difficulty, but I was far from thinking it a work of impracticability. What became of that advice is manifest by the result. It was not acted upon; but for what reason it was not acted upon, I am not aware; and more than I know I cannot state. But from the time when I first saw the King, and gave the advice I have described, down to the period when His Majesty came to town, I had no knowledge to any certainty that the advice which I gave had not been adopted. So far, therefore, from seeking or soliciting, as the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) charges me, the post which I have now the honour to hold, I withdrew myself altogether from any participation in the arrangements, in order that the experiment which was said to be so loudly called for by the country might be fairly tried—an experiment which was sought to be enforced, by the abortive motion of the honourable member for Somersetshire (Sir T. Lethbridge).*

I withdrew, Sir, in order to have that experi-

* Sir T. Lethbridge had given notice of a motion which he subsequently withdrew; the object of which was to advise His Majesty, by Address, to form an Administration united in opposition to the Catholic claims.

ment fully and fairly tried; and I solemnly declare, that there was nothing at that moment for which I was more anxious than that my stepping out of the way might remove every obstacle to that trial. But when it was distinctly stated to me that such an Administration could not be formed, and when I received His Majesty's commands to model a Government on the same principle as that of Lord Liverpool's, of which I had been a member, nothing remained but to construct a Government of the divided character to which I have alluded, upon the subject of Catholic emancipation, with the necessary consequence that the question of the removal of Catholic disabilities should not be made a Cabinet measure.

But then, with the proposal to form a Government upon that principle—upon the very principle of my predecessor—came a new question: a question which at once involved the point of—whether I was to remain in the situation which I then filled, disgraced in my own opinion, and discredited in the eyes of my country, or whether I was to receive from the hands of my Sovereign, undiminished and unencumbered, that inheritance which a dreadful misfortune (for dreadful I may indeed call it) had placed at his disposal. Now, what was it I proposed? What was it I had it in command to do in the reconstruction of the Government? To form a ministry upon the principle of Lord Liverpool's Administration. That

the Government should even consist of the very same individuals, I am sure I had every wish. But what was proposed to me? That I, having His Majesty's commands to form a Government upon the very same principles as those of my lamented predecessor, should place at the head of that Government some peer who was known to entertain anti-catholic sentiments. Now what principle was it I was desired to sanction by the adoption of that course? Why, I was desired to acknowledge in the face of the country, that *I*, forming a Government upon the principle of Lord Liverpool's, that is, composed of persons divided in their opinions on the Catholic claims, was, from the very holding of opinions favourable to those claims, disqualified from being placed at the head of that Government. I will retire altogether, and for ever, from public life—I will betake myself to the farthest boundary of the earth, and into perpetual banishment—I will resign any and every hope of office—for I care nothing for office—but I will not disgrace myself by consenting to sanction a principle which must bring degradation as well upon myself as upon those who would become subject to such exclusion, on account of holding these opinions. That principle, Sir, I repeat, I will not at any time, as I would not then, sanction. I would a thousand times rather quit office—Iwould rather be proscribed and persecuted by all who are disposed

to proscribe and persecute for opinions, than live to be execrated to all futurity, for having, in my person, fixed such a blot upon the cause of those who think that every man is free to hold opinions, although he might not be able to persuade others to adopt them. I hope, Sir, I have now vindicated myself, to the satisfaction of the House, from the charge of overweening ambition. I throw myself upon this House and the country for a candid construction of my conduct.

My first object was to quit office—my next to remain in it with all my old colleagues, exactly upon the same terms as we had hitherto acted towards each other upon this very Catholic Question. It was for this that I have been arraigned, not, indeed, by my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel), who fairly stated his opinions to me, but by another honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson), who, in the coarsest language, preferred against me as a charge —"That the new Government which has been formed, consists chiefly of Catholics," (that is, of members friendly to the question of emancipation)—as if there had been a breach of faith on my part in dealing with the late Cabinet, for not having proposed to my Sovereign a plan for a new Cabinet, that should have embraced an equal portion of the supporters of both sides of that question. I did suggest, as the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) who makes the charge himself well knows, and did endeavour and in-

tend to execute, such a plan of a new Administration. But, Sir, that honourable gentleman equally well knows that when, upon the 12th of April last, I intended to propose to my Sovereign a plan of arrangement which should comprise all the members of Lord Liverpool's Government, and embrace, therefore, an equality of Protestant and Catholic votes, circumstances occurred which prevented that intention from taking effect. And was it my fault, Sir, that (by a sort of concert, I will not venture to say, but by a singular coincidence, undoubtedly,) I either carried with me, or received in the closet of my Sovereign, *exclusive* of the resignation of my right honourable friend, of which I knew beforehand, six Protestant resignations. (I call them Protestant only in the parlance of this House.) Observe, Sir, the charge against me is, that I have organized a Government all Catholic, as to its views upon that question, having promised to form one that should be half and half; and my honourable accuser sinks the indisputable fact, that the Protestant half of the Administration themselves withdrew. I think that it is rather too hard to charge that withdrawal upon their parts, as a breach of faith upon mine.

Mr. Peel here observed, in a low tone, that the right honourable gentleman did not state the matter quite correctly. There were not, he was understood to say, so many resignations.

MR. CANNING.—My right honourable friend is, I believe, right; *exclusive* of his resignation, I think I had not received six* Protestant resignations, when I was with the King. One came after I had left His Majesty.

MR. PEEL here observed, that one of them was not an opponent to Catholic emancipation.

MR. CANNING.—I beg pardon of the House; there was one Catholic lord (Lord Melville) among the number of those who thus resigned; and yet we are now told these resignations grew out of the question of Catholic emancipation. However, these six resignations came within twenty-four hours; and I would now ask the House whether it is fair, after such an abandonment of place by these Protestant peers, to impeach me of a wilful non-execution of the orders of my Sovereign? But, Sir, the matter did not end here. It was about the middle of Thursday—the day on which the House adjourned—about two hours before the meeting of the House, and after I had given directions to move a new writ for my return, that I received four of these resignations. Upon receiving them, I said to my Sovereign, "Here, Sire, is that which disables me from executing the orders I have received from you, respecting the

* The real order in which the resignations were received, is stated in a subsequent speech of Mr. Canning, in explanation of the changes in the administration.

formation of a new Administration. It is now open to your Majesty to adopt a new course, for no step has yet been taken, in the execution of those orders, that is irrevocable; but I must fairly state to your Majesty, that if I am to go on in the position where you have been pleased to place me, my writ must be moved for to-day; for if we wait until the holidays, without adopting any definitive steps, I see that it is quite hopeless for me to attempt to persevere in the objects I have undertaken." I need not repeat to the House the words in which my Sovereign graciously replied to this representation; but I may state that he gave me his hand to kiss, and confirmed me in the office to which I had been named.

These, then, Sir, are the steps which I really have taken; these are the means by which I have been placed in the station I at present fill. I have meddled not with the conduct or the opinions of any other man. I have already expressed my unequivocal approbation of the course pursued by my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel.) What have been the principles of conduct of others among my late colleagues, for the best of reasons and the wisest, I do not pretend to say, for really I do not know them. That conduct I can only view by its results, results which have been assuredly most painful; and I may truly say, to me as painful as, in almost every instance—(every instance I do not say, for I sedulously except my

right honourable friend)—they were unexpected. Sir, I really knew not in what way I had sinned in the eyes of my late colleagues—those other of my late colleagues, I should rather say—that they should decline acting with me. I had never offended them intentionally, nor did I know that I had ever excited among them unwittingly any feeling so hostile or personal to me, as to be at all likely to lead to this result. Between my right honourable friend and myself, it is almost unnecessary for me to observe, that upon every subject, in every discussion I can call to mind, upon all great questions of foreign or domestic policy and legislation—this one unhappy question of Catholic emancipation excepted—there has been that sort of general agreement, that I do not believe there exists the individual with whom my opinions are in more complete accordance; and I do not think any greater calamity could have befallen the country than my right honourable friend's secession from the Cabinet, not only as respects his administration of his office, the duties of which he had discharged with so much ability, and such signal advantages to the public, but in the general councils of the Government. We shall nevertheless, I hope, though deprived at this moment of his aid in the Administration, have the benefit of it in his place, in the general share of the legislative business of the kingdom as a member of Parliament. But as to others of my late colleagues, I

am not prepared to express an opinion on the proceeding they have adopted, because of its motives I am not aware. So far, indeed, as I had reason to know any thing of their dispositions in relation to myself—I speak now more particularly in reference to the line of foreign policy I have pursued, as being that department of the Government with which I was more immediately connected—I understood that my official conduct had received their approbation. Both in the Cabinet, and in the two Houses of Parliament, they expressed such favourable opinions; nor can I charge myself with having, by any measures of my own, produced intentionally any such change in those opinions as should have led to this unwillingness on their parts to continue to act with me. I am determined, however, to say nothing of the conduct of any body, with whose motives I am unacquainted, and to abstain from animadversions, where I do not know them to have been really provoked. I have resolved, Sir, therefore, to make no further observations at this time, than might be necessary to accompany the facts which I conceived requisite to bring before the House, with the view of explaining how I came into this situation, and how it is that my late colleagues are no longer around me.

There were two topics growing out of the speech of my right honourable friend, upon which he will allow me to make one or two observations,

not, as I can most cordially assure him, in any hostile or unpleasant feeling; but that I may set myself right upon points, touching which, he has laboured, I think, under some degree of misunderstanding. My right honourable friend says, how should it be possible that when I—(and I trust, Sir, that the House will excuse me for the painful necessity which compels me to use this monosyllable so often)—that when I have been advanced to the high situation in which I now stand, how should it be possible that, without saying or doing any thing actively and expressly to promote the success of the Catholic Question, my existence, nevertheless, in that situation, and other contingent results, arising out of it, but for which I am not responsible, should not be a great moral advancement of that cause? Sir, I cannot deny the truth of this proposition of my right honourable friend.

I cannot, I frankly avow, deny the general truth of my right honourable friend's observation, and in the admission of that identical fact, will be found the obvious answer to the taunts of the honourable baronet opposite (Sir T. Lethbridge) at the support which the present Government are now receiving from the gentlemen of the opposition. Why have these gentlemen supported me? Because they saw, in the aspect of the present state of things, exactly the same tendency which my right honourable friend has seen towards the

moral advancement of that great question; namely, that without my official interference, indeed, with my present inaction, they behold a considerable prospect of improvement in a question for which they feel with me a common interest. If so, it is a good reason why I should have their support, and equally so for my right honourable friend to oppose me; but it is a little too much for an honourable member to say that the reason is good at one side and bad at the other; whilst both parties concur in anticipating the same result. If my right honourable friend is justified in resigning, because with my passive existence in office the Catholic Question must thrive, surely the same reason holds good for my receiving the support of other gentlemen who contemplate, in the success of such a question, the tranquillity and consolidation of the empire. My right honourable friend's defence of his own retreat must, therefore, be taken as a complete and conclusive answer to all the taunts which are levelled at the support held out to me from other quarters of the House; that support, I feel confident, will be continued to me as long they respect and approve the measures which I shall introduce; and, in the same relative feeling, and no other, I am persuaded I shall have to receive the support, and encounter the opposition of my right honourable friend.

But, Sir, I am asked—"Is the Roman Catholic

Question, in point of fact, with the new Government, a Cabinet question?" I answer, No. It stands exactly, Sir, as it did in the year 1812, but in a part of the year 1812, which my right honourable friend has not exactly distinguished from another part of that year to which his speech referred. It is very tiresome to refer to books in discussions of this kind, and not being prepared to anticipate the necessity of consulting them on this occasion, I did not bring them down with me; but in consequence of my right honourable friend's speech, I have sent for them, and I can now recur to them. My right honourable friend says, that in a debate which took place on the 21st of May, 1812, in assigning my reasons for not joining Lord Liverpool's Government at that time, I stated, that my belief was, that, were I so to do, I should be coming into a Cabinet that would nullify my own opinions, or that I used expressions to that effect. He further supposes, that *as*, in 1812, notwithstanding the failure of Mr. Grattan's motion, I immediately after introduced and carried by a large majority a motion to the same effect, so now, in 1827, notwithstanding the failure of the motion of the honourable member for Westminster (Sir F. Burdett), the situation of this question being "pretty nearly the same," he sees no reason for my not again pursuing the same course in this very session.

But, Sir, the circumstances which existed in 1812 are not "pretty nearly the same" as those which exist at present.

Did nothing, I will ask my right honourable friend, intervene between the period of the failure of Mr. Grattan's motion and the 22nd of June, to cause the change to which he alludes? Was there no alteration in the condition of the Government, and *consequently* in the feeling of Parliament upon that subject during this interval? Yes: for on the 17th of May, which was shortly after the death of Mr. Perceval, Lord Liverpool came to me, to propose to me to become a member of the Administration. What passed on this subject, Gentlemen will be pleased to remember, was published, together with all the negociations entered into on that occasion, and having been so recorded, cannot have been since altered, to answer any temporary purpose. After one or two questions —I believe, indeed, after one preliminary question —I asked (the right honourable gentleman here read from the Annual Register of that year, apologising for the want of any better reference, by stating he was taken wholly by surprise)— "Whether I was to consider the opinion and policy of the Government as remaining altogether unchanged, upon the question relating to the laws affecting the Roman Catholics?" Lord Liverpool answered, "that his own opinions upon this sub-

ject remained unchanged: and that he was not aware that those of his colleagues had undergone any alteration."

Now, here, Sir, I pause to ask what was the condition in which the Catholic Question stood then? At the period of the unrestricted Regency, Mr. Perceval invited into his Government Lord Sidmouth and Lord Castlereagh; and in the very first debate upon this question which took place in this House, after that junction, Mr. Perceval and Lord Castlereagh both declared themselves, in the course of the discussion, inimical to the agitation of the question at that opportunity. Lord Castlereagh said, (the House will observe, that it was upon Mr. Grattan's motion, in April, 1812) "with respect to the vote I shall give to-night, my right honourable friend has clearly stated, that the Cabinet intimates an opinion, that the propriety of further concessions to the Catholics could not now be agitated, nor any inquiry be gone into at present, on the subject of the disabilities affecting His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Ireland, with advantage to the empire, or a due regard to the welfare of the community at large." Why, then, Sir, the footing upon which the Cabinet *then* stood, in respect of the Catholic Question, was one of general resistance to it, and in the Government itself, there was a joint determination to act upon that principle. It was in this state of things, that on

the 18th of May, 1812, I refused to join in Lord Liverpool's arrangements, and I gave him my reasons for not doing so, which were involved in that determination on the part of the Administration. But what happened in the mean time, between May the 18th, and June the 22nd? Why, that on June the 10th, Lord Castlereagh came down to this House, when I find that Mr. Spencer Stanhope rose to put a question to the noble lord:—"He wished to know if it was intended, on the part of the present Ministers, that the same policy, in every respect, should be observed by them, in reference to the Catholic Question, which had been observed by the Administration, under a late right honourable gentleman (Mr. Perceval)?" Lord Castlereagh said, "that he felt some difficulty in answering the question of the honourable gentleman literally, the arrangements for the new Ministry not having been yet fully completed. But as to the spirit of the question, he thought he could be more satisfactory. He could say this, from his knowledge of those employed in forming that Administration, that, generally, their sentiments remained the same. Upon a former occasion, they had thought, inclusive even of those who were favourable to the measure, that the present was not the time for discussing that question, and in still thinking so, that recent decisions of Parliament formed a leading consideration in influencing the adoption of that opinion.

The sense of Parliament having been, at least for the present, definitively pronounced, they thought that any immediate revived discussion would only create irritation, without being productive of any thing useful. He was aware, however, of the growing change in favour of those claims; and, in submission to that change, and the real sentiments of certain members of the Government, it had been resolved on, as a principle, that the discussion of this question should be left free from all interference, on the part of the Government, and that every member of that Government should be left to the free and unbiassed suggestions of his own conscientious discretion."

Here, then, it is evident that a complete change had occurred between the 18th of May and the 22d of June 1812, in the opinions of the Government. At the former period, the Cabinet were all united in resistance to the Catholic Question; at the latter, it was to be left open and free to the unbiassed discussion of all or any of the members of that Cabinet.

Then, I contend, Sir, that between these two periods, of which my right honourable friend has spoken, the Cabinet itself was changed in its character, as regarded this question. It was changed, by this question being put upon that independent footing, on which it has remained during the many years that my right honourable friend and myself have acted together. Did this

altered condition of circumstances effect no change in the condition of the Catholic Question? Assuredly it did; and I well recollect its being hailed by Mr. Grattan, and many others who voted with him, as a most important accession to that cause: and the proof of the fact is, that my motion was carried by a triumphant majority.

Now, I think, I have sufficiently explained the difference which had arisen between the two periods in question, as to this important subject, and as to my views upon it. I have not the vanity to believe (and I am sure I beg pardon of the House for troubling it with these passages from the debates) that the speech to which my right honourable friend refers procured that result of which I have spoken.

But to come to the present condition of that Question, I say again, it remains in this Government, in the state it was truly described to be in by Lord Castlereagh in 1812; and precisely as it has been since repeatedly described by myself; in short, as it was described to be in 1825, in a debate which took place in the month of March upon the state of Ireland; and in the very last debate in the last session of Parliament, in the same year, upon Catholic emancipation. On that occasion I used these words: "I hold myself as perfectly free as any other member of this House, to pronounce an opinion upon this as a great national question, and as

such, to give it my support, reserving only to myself the right of selecting the time when I am to give that support, and the manner in which it is to be afforded, according to my judgment of the degree of success which is likely to attend such an exertion." These were the words I used then, and my opinions are not in the slightest degree varied at the present moment. Such was the footing upon which this question stood when I was the colleague of my right honourable friend; and such *is* the footing on which it stands now. Let it be observed, therefore, by those with whom I have formerly acted, and from whose objections on this occasion I do not shrink, however the acknowledgment I have made may be attempted to be converted into matter of opposition, that, with those who form the present Cabinet, and some of whom formed part of the last, the Catholic Question now stands on the same ground as it stood on under Lord Liverpool's Government;—that is, it is a question which each member of the Government is at liberty, if he pleases, to bring forward in the Cabinet, or to propound to Parliament; but if any member of the Government shall so bring it forward in either House of Parliament, he is bound distinctly to state that he does so in his individual capacity only, and not as pledging his colleagues to his own opinions on the subject. This, Sir, is the position of the Catholic Question now; it is

the same in which it was placed in the year 1812; it is the same in which it has now stood for fifteen years successively. That it should remain in this state is a fact which I know has been much objected to by many; but, if I consider the state of the country at large—the inclination of men's minds upon this matter in England as well as in Ireland—and the infinite difficulties which surround the attempt at present to alter that state—in my judgment, and in my conscience I believe it to be the only footing upon which it can be at present left; unless the views of partizans are to be consulted, the accomplishment of whose wishes on the one hand, or whose attempt to stifle free and growing opinions on the other, would, in the result, lead to a convulsion, in one part or other, of the United Kingdom. Now, Sir, I am not prepared for convulsion. in either. I would not raise hopes which I do not see any immediate means of realising. In making this observation, I am not speaking of the moral accomplishment of those hopes, but of exciting expectations without having good grounds to anticipate their immediate or speedy fulfilment. I remember too well, and but a short memory indeed is required for that purpose, how much has been uttered in the way of complaint in debates of this House upon the Catholic Question, about things being said and done that had raised expectations in Ireland which ought not, it has been observed, to have

been excited, unless the authorities from whom those acts and declarations emanated were prepared to follow them up.

Now, Sir, it is precisely because of my not being at present prepared to follow them up, that I will not raise such expectations. Much and cordially as I agree with those who view the measure itself of emancipation, as calculated to tranquillize Ireland, I yet estimate very highly the degree of passive resistance to it, which exists in this country. I would not act against the feelings any more than I would against the interests of England. But if, looking to the character and extent of that resistance, I am asked whether I despair of the ultimate success of the question, I answer, that I do not despair that the good sense of the English people, by candid discussion, and repeated consideration of it, will ultimately concede the question. I say, I think, Sir, the time will come, when well-meaning and conscientious, and even intelligent people, now among the most strenuous and most honest opponents of the great measure, will look back with a degree of surprise, and almost incredulity, at the opposition which they have, up to this time, manifested to it. But, though I think this, I am not prepared to run counter, in the mean time, to English feeling. A single week of peace in England, is worth a much larger portion of time devoted to the accomplishment of a great, but

yet, partly, a theoretical, good, in another portion of the empire. Though I thus confidently expect the dawn, I am by no means prepared to hasten it; though I know the present darkness upon this subject—for darkness I must consider it—will be succeeded by a great illumination in the minds of men, I am disposed to watch patiently the progress of that enlightenment. This result, I heartily hope, but I will not endeavour to anticipate it by any attempt to force the judgments of the community.

I hope I have now, Sir, given to honourable gentlemen every satisfactory explanation upon the topics which have been this night referred to.

So far as I am aware, I have kept nothing back; but when I am taunted by questions such as that which some honourable gentlemen have put to me, whether I do not know that in the very *penetralia* of the royal breast there exist feelings repugnant to the Catholic claims, I reply, that I would venerate in that most illustrious individual, as I did in his royal father, the repugnant feelings which actuate him on this question. I would hurt no feelings, as I have already said, of that nature. But if I am asked by that honourable gentleman, whether I think the Coronation Oath is any obstacle in the way of concession on the part of the Crown, I answer, No. No more did Lord Liverpool—no more did my right honourable friend himself (Mr. Peel); and if the time shall ever come

when it may be necessary to argue this question, I shall derive my best argument, for the view I take of that point, from the opinions which have already been addressed to Parliament upon the subject by those great authorities. Let not, then, the people of England take up the notion, that, by the carrying of the Catholic Question, the peace of their country would be endangered. The time has passed when those pernicious influences, which have been so much adverted to, could be any longer exercised by the Catholic Church, with any effect upon its peace or its welfare. But do the honourable gentlemen, who so much deprecate all discussion of this question, imagine that discussion can be avoided? Do they suppose that if we will not consider it, it is a question which will sleep? Or do they believe, that if it should sleep, it will be awakened by any other than a dreadful and deplorable emergency? No, Sir, we must look it in the face. We must not turn from it. But, though I believe that it is a question which has gained strength from the change which has taken place in the Government —(a change, God knows! not of my seeking, but arising out of the King's determination)—though I concur with those who imagine that it is a cause which has acquired additional power—I would not force it by pressing it upon Parliament now, any more than I did when I formed, with my right

honourable friend near me, one of the Government of Lord Liverpool.

I am not conscious that I have omitted to reply to any of the matters which have been suggested to me; but if I have, I shall be sincerely obliged to any querist who will remind me, be he who he may, of any such omissions.

I trust I have succeeded in showing that I am, where I have the honour to be, not by my own solicitation, but by the pleasure of my Sovereign. I had previously recommended the formation of an Administration, from which I should have been excluded. That plan was rejected by those whom it embraced, and another proposed in its stead, to which I could not have acceded, without, at the same time, recording my acknowledgment that the opinions of my past political life, upon one of the most important of all the questions which I have ever been called on to consider, furnished a justifiable ground of exclusion from the highest office in the Government. I will conclude, by repeating one or two remarks which I remember to have made to the House in 1822. I was then appointed to a post, which I owed not to the favour of His Majesty's Government, but to the commands of His Majesty himself: a post, fraught with wealth, distinction, and honour. From this post I was recalled immediately after my nomination to it, contrary to my own feelings and wishes,

to hold office in this country. I made the sacrifice—(to a poor man, be it permitted me to say, no indifferent or trivial one),—without hesitation, and—so help me God—without any stipulations. But if, Sir, when that proposal to take office was made to me, it had been accompanied—(as in fairness it should have been, if I was to be ousted on account of the opinions that have since been excepted against me)—with this sort of intimation from the Ministers who recalled me:—"Though we call you into the Government, because your services are necessary to us, yet remember, that if, by any unfortunate chance, the highest situation in that Government should become vacant, and should in all other respects be eligible for a person holding your situation in Parliament and in the councils of the country—remember, that because you support the Catholic claims you are to waive all pretensions to it." If their proposal, I say, had been accompanied with such an intimation, I would, with the same disdain and indignation with which I have more recently rejected their offer to serve under a Protestant Premier (using the term Protestant in the familiar sense only in which we are accustomed to use it in discussions of this kind), have rejected that proposal, containing, as it would have done, a condition which I should have regarded as the badge of my helotism, and as the indelible disgrace of my political existence.

The motion on which the discussion arose was then agreed to, after which the House adjourned.

CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

MAY 4th, 1827.

General Gascoyne was proceeding, pursuant to notice, announced in February last, to bring forward his Motion on the State of the Shipping Interest—when

Mr. Dawson, as soon as Mr. Canning entered the House, said, that he wished to ascertain from the right honourable gentleman, who had just taken his place, whether any arrangement had been made, or was in contemplation, for filling up the offices of Master of the Mint, Judge Advocate, and Surveyor General of Woods and Forests?

Mr. Canning. "Yes."

Mr. Dawson complained of the want of courtesy in the abrupt and unsatisfactory reply of the right honourable gentleman. He then animadverted severely on the coalition which had been entered into between the right honourable gentleman and the last Opposition. Disagreeable as it might be to the right honourable gentleman to hear it, and disagreeable as it was to him to utter it, he must say that the right honourable gentleman had not been very scrupulous as to the means by which his ambitious course had been pursued. Then, as for the other party—the late Opposition—if they abandoned the Catholic Question only for one hour, they would do so for considerations which all the country would understand. They would have abandoned it after having clamoured in-

cessantly for it, at the very first moment when valuable places were to be given away, and when—if the report which he had heard was the correct one—other valuable places were to be kept open ready to reward and gratify them for their support.

He had heard the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) say on a former night, that he had received the resignations of six Ministers "in the King's closet." This was the statement of the right honourable gentleman, which it was impossible for him (Mr. Dawson) to doubt. Now he had heard four of these Ministers state, that their resignations had been sent to the right honourable gentleman in ample time for him to receive them at his proper place of address—the Foreign Office. If the letters, having been duly and in proper time received at the Foreign Office, were purposely delayed in their delivery until they were presented to the right honourable gentleman in the King's closet, the inference was obvious, that such a device was calculated to produce the impression upon the Royal mind, that the noble persons resigning had entered into a low cabal, in order to prevent their King from having the benefit of their services.

The honourable member cited the various instances in which Mr. Brougham and Mr. Canning voted on opposite sides, with a view of showing that there was not that coincidence in opinion between them on the affairs of the foreign and domestic policy of the country, which the honourable and learned gentleman on a former evening stated to be a justification of the coalition between them. The honourable member concluded by moving, "That copies of the patents for the appointment to the offices of the Master of the Mint and of the Judge Advocate should be laid on the table."

Mr. Brougham rose to second the motion, *pro formâ*, which excited considerable laughter. The honourable and

learned gentleman then proceeded: "My successors, whom I see with pleasure on the opposite benches, have proved themselves in turn the most apt learners, I will not say of all the tricks and wiles of faction, but at least of all the most extraordinary resources of faction I have ever yet seen framed, in that most respectable school. Never in the course of my experience of opposition, either as an amateur or as an artist, as a bye-stander or as a practiser in my own person, have I witnessed any thing approaching the dexterity of the evolution of to-day. With matchless skill, not indeed in the middle, but in the exordium of a speech, of a subject of which several weeks' notice had been given by the gallant member for Liverpool, the honourable gentleman has contrived to interject a motion, not for the sake of annoying His Majesty's Ministers, but for the purpose of creating an intercalary debate. Judging, then, of its after performances from the beginning of the new opposition—be its career long as I might wish it, or short as they may desire it—it is quite certain that a more violent, a more unhesitating, a more unscrupulous party never was gotten together, than that which broke ground for the first time the night before last. Now, before I come to what may be called the trifles and incumbrances of the subject—before I come to the question on which, in the excess of his self-denial, the honourable gentleman said he would not address the House—before I come to my no answer to his no question, and reply to him in much the same way as he appealed to me, I wish to say a few words on the more important matter with which he concluded. I admire the frankness and manliness of the honourable gentleman, as much as the gallant general (Gascoyne), or the honourable member who assists him with an accordant cheer. His frank proceeding is infinitely better than an ambiguous, half-avowed, and half-concealed resistance, because it at once discloses the foot which is meant

to carry the honourable gentleman back to office, and to kick the Catholics far from emancipation."

* * * *

"He has been but a week out of place, and he finds his situation not so agreeable as to make him wish to continue a month out of it, much less for half a year; and his prudent plan, therefore, is to urge the open friends of the Catholic Question to do that which, I verily in my conscience believe, would be fatal to its success. There are times and seasons when it is proverbially awful to take a lesson from the enemy. Let me caution the Catholics, who, too often for their own benefit, have taken lessons from over zealous and indiscreet friends, against taking a second lesson from their opponents, in addition to that of which I warned them a few days ago. The honourable gentleman may proffer his advice and tuition—he may give the Catholics all the benefit of his repeated and reiterated instruction, but they are stricken with nothing less than madness if they doubt now that to follow his recommendation would be the total ruin of their interests. Let the Catholics trust to the effects of discussion, of time, of better lights breaking in from various quarters, of their own forbearance, of their own abstinence from offensive topics, and of their rejection of the influence of suspicious advisers. Let them conciliate those who are hostile from honest prejudices, by respecting scruples, of the existence of which we have all but authentic information from the honourable gentleman on the bench opposite. Let them hope all from forbearance, moderation, and a conciliatory demeanour; let them eschew the hasty councils of intemperate friends; but, above all, let them eschew the wily councils of open and avowed enemies, who, for party purposes, throw over the naked deformity of the most virulent factious feeling by far the thinnest disguise I ever yet beheld. Let them eschew

the advice of their open, avowed, manly, and honest enemies. But when I call them honest enemies, I must add one word, not in qualification of a well-merited epithet, but in order not to let it be supposed I am admitting their consistency when I assert the honesty of my anti-Catholic adversaries. That I, belonging as it were to the present Government, devoted to liberal opinions, and the constant friend of the repeal of all penal laws affecting men civilly for religion and conscience' sake—that I, naturally impatient to seize every occasion, at all risks, of furthering the great Catholic cause, should not hesitate to involve the country in something like confusion and a tendency to a breach of the King's peace to obtain the object to which I am so zealously devoted, would not be deemed extraordinary; but it is, indeed, strange, that those who have hitherto been always exclaiming, 'for God's sake, do not stir this eternal question,' should now be most eager in recommending its discussion."

Mr. Canning:—I rise, Sir, at present, only to claim that priority of discussion for the proposition which is regularly before the House, which properly belongs to that subject, and of which the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) has so irregularly and improperly endeavoured to deprive it. The manner in which the honourable gentleman has introduced this discussion is most irregular and improper, and is only so far fortunate, that this method of proceeding has a tendency to work its own cure by the

disgust which it must necessarily create among all impartial people; and honourable gentlemen opposite may find, that if their weakness should make them resort to mere annoyance,—our strength will bear them down. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson) is well aware that the priority of discussion this night belongs to a subject, the consideration of which involves some of the most important interests in the state (the shipping interest); and that there are now many members waiting within these walls who feel deeply interested, that the regular discussion should come on. I can assure the honourable member (Mr. Dawson), that I feel no asperity or malice against him for any thing he may have insinuated respecting my conduct. I am too old a stager not to be able to bear his attack without resentment. I can easily bear his assault, after having borne the assaults of those benches, when filled by other persons of a quality which I am not likely soon again to encounter. I can assure the honourable member that none of these taunts will be able to drive me from my resolution of meeting his attacks when properly brought forward, or from disdaining them when brought forward improperly. On one point the honourable gentleman has accused me of being mistaken, namely, the assertion which I made on a former evening respecting the resignations of my late colleagues. I had not my papers with me at that time, but with the leave of the House I will

again state to them from those papers the course in which those resignations reached me. It was on the night of the 11th of April that I received the resignation of Lord Westmoreland—of the resignation of my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel), I was aware some days before. I received the resignation of the Duke of Wellington on the 12th, at half-past ten, A.M. Lord Bexley sent in his shortly after. With these three written resignations, and with the verbal resignation of my right honourable friend (Mr. Peel), I went to St. James's. The resignations of Lord Eldon and Lord Bathurst arrived at the Foreign Office during my absence, and did not reach me until I was in the King's closet. I will state further, that so far from anticipating the immediate resignation of Lord Eldon, that His Majesty and myself were under the delusion that there were the best reasons to expect, at least for a time, the support of his services in the new arrangements. I assure the House, on my honour, this is the exact state of the affair. But with respect to Lord Eldon, it is only bare justice to his lordship to say, that his conduct throughout this negociation was that of a man of high honour, and perfectly unexceptionable. As to the present motion of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Dawson), for the production of the patent for the appointment to certain offices, I know not how the production of that patent, and the laying it on the table of

the House, can have the effect of satisfying his anxiety, unless it be, according to the old Cambridge problem, that the masts and guns of the ships being given, and dividing by the men, you may get at the name of the captain. I hope the honourable gentleman may now perceive that he cannot succeed in putting me out of temper, and that the House will be now permitted to recur to the order of the day.

After Mr. Peel and Sir F. Burdett had severally addressed the House in vindication of the propriety of their respective conduct, the former in withdrawing from the present Administration, the latter in supporting it,—

Sir E. Knatchbull animadverted severely upon the extraordinary circumstance of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning) at the head of His Majesty's Government declining to answer questions put to him respecting the principles and formation of his Administration, and leaving the honourable and learned gentleman (Mr. Brougham), to answer those questions for him.

Mr. Canning then rose, and said:—I hope that the House will permit me to say a very few words in reply to the very didactic speech of the honourable baronet who has just favoured the House with his opinions, and in explanation of my observation upon a former occasion. The speech of the honourable baronet refers principally to the reception which I have given to a question addressed to me in the com-

mencement of this debate. I do not object to that question itself upon any considerations connected with its object; but I must take leave to say that I have never known, in the whole of my parliamentary experience, those rules which courtesy points out, and which convenience sanctions, to have been violated to so great a degree by any member of this House, as in that instance. Upon the understanding that the answer is to be a mere matter of courtesy, it sometimes does happen that a member, without any previous notice, asks leave to put a brief question to the Minister, upon a subject of pressing importance. Such I have (speaking from my own recollection and experience) always understood to be the course; but I never, I repeat, recollect any instance of a question without notice being accompanied by a speech such as we have this night heard from the honourable member opposite (Mr. Dawson). This was my impression, and I have since consulted others, who declare it to be theirs also, and pronounced to be a correct one. That any honourable member, under the pretence of asking a question, should seize the opportunity of introducing a motion, and that motion too thrust forward in the middle of another motion of great and paramount importance,—the business of the evening,—and the discussion upon which the House was most anxiously awaiting, is, however, I repeat, a circumstance altogether unprecedented in the annals of Parliament. To that question

thus put to me, and under these circumstances, I applied my observation, when I said the attempt was only calculated to excite disgust. There is a consequence, too, resulting from it which the honourable gentleman does not foresee; and that is, that no Minister, if such a course be pursued, will feel himself bound to answer questions at all, of which ample and regular notice is not given. The honourable member made it a matter of complaint against me, and alleged it as a reason for his conduct, that I was not in my place at the time he expected, and when he wished his question to be answered. But did not the honourable gentleman recollect it was usual, in such cases, to have the courtesy to give some notice of a member's intention? If he had given me the slightest intimation that he intended to put any question to me, it certainly would have brought me down instantly to give a reply; but, even then, I might have felt not a little surprised at the course pursued by the honourable member—a course so absurd and so inconvenient that any one must see it could not for a moment be tolerated. I rejoice, Sir, however, that the standard of opposition is at length unfurled in this House. Such an act is, to me, worth a thousand professions of qualified neutrality. In whatever mind the feeling of opposition lurks, let it come boldly forth, and boldly will I meet it. There have been one or two questions put to me—I trust

the House will extend its indulgence to me, while I briefly answer them. I am asked what I mean to do on the subject of parliamentary reform? Why, I say—to oppose it—to oppose it to the end of my life in this House, as hitherto I have done. I am asked what I intend to do respecting the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts? My answer is—to oppose it too. It has happened by some accident that the Test Act is one of the few subjects upon which it has never yet been my lot to pronounce an opinion fully in this House; but I have an opinion upon it, and I do not hesitate to declare it. I think that the exertions of the Legislature ought to be directed to the redress of *practical* and *not theoretical* grievances. I think that any meddling with the Test Act—of which the alleged grievances are comparatively theoretical—might tend to prejudice that great question, (the Catholic Question) which is attended with real practical and pressing grievances to those whom the present laws relating to it affect, and the success of which I have most truly at heart. I will, therefore, oppose the repeal. I hope I have spoken out. I hope I have made myself clearly understood. As to the charge brought against me by the honourable baronet (Sir E. Knatchbull), that the Government, when called upon to give an answer upon the subject of its composition and its policy, left the answer to those who had no apparent interest in the question, or connection with it. Sir, I deny the charge. I say, without

hesitation, that the accusation is untrue. I did not shrink from the question.* The question to which the honourable baronet adverted was not addressed to me. I never have shrunk—I never will shrink—from explanation or defence, whether the charge preferred against me, be conveyed in the avowed hostility of the open and manly foe, or in the not less dangerous insinuation of the disavowed opponent.

[After some further conversation, the House adjourned.]

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

MAY 7th, 1827.

Mr. Maberly said, that if he might venture to ask so much of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Canning), or rather to urge it to him as a suggestion, he would recommend to him most strongly, to grant a Committee, early in the next session of Parliament, to inquire into the financial situation of the country.

Mr. Canning.—Although it was certainly my intention not to be provoked to take any part in this discussion, arising on extraneous matters, I am yet, not provoked indeed, but induced, Sir, by

* The question here adverted to was one calling upon Sir F. Burdett and other members of the late opposition, to explain and justify the grounds of their coalition with Mr. Canning, to whom they were opposed on many important points. The misapprehension of Sir E. Knatchbull arose from supposing Mr. Canning was called upon to explain and justify his coalition with them.—Editor.

the speech of the honourable member for Abingdon, to address a few words to the House, on the subject to which he has called my attention. I am pleased also with the opportunity of answering the honourable member who spoke last, and of answering him on what he is courteously pleased to say,—he does not put to me as a question, but as a recommendation only, and, in respect to which, the House, I think, may probably be glad to hear me state my present intentions. Now, Sir, it is undoubtedly my intention to propose, early in the next session of Parliament, a Committee of Finance, similar to those committees which were appointed three several times in Mr. Pitt's administration; after him, in 1807, during Mr. Perceval's government; and again, in 1807, on the motion of Lord Bexley. It is my intention to propose such a committee, and to submit to its consideration the whole state of our revenue. I ought in justice to add, that it was fully the intention, during the last session of Parliament, of my right honourable, now my noble friend (Lord Goderich) to lay before this House such a proposition, and that intention would have been executed, had not public events taken so extraordinary a course, as to drive him at that time from his purpose; and had not the state of the country been subsequently such as to preclude any immediate expectation of bringing such a measure to a successful issue. I am the rather glad that the measure was postponed, because, without desiring by this state-

ment improperly to raise the hopes of the country, I do feel justified in saying, that its condition is gradually, slowly, but perceptibly improving. Under these circumstances, whatever may be the ultimate disposition of this House after we have looked our financial situation fully in the face, and after this committee shall have brought its labours fully to a close, I shall best discharge my duty, and best consult the interests of the country, by avoiding, this year, all resort to extraordinary measures, and by shunning every thing which would promote agitation or excite speculation of any kind in the community. [The right honourable gentleman concluded by giving notice, that early on a future evening, he would bring forward the Budget for this year.]

CHANGE IN THE ADMINISTRATION.

MAY 11th, 1827.

Sir T. Lethbridge this day withdrew the notice which he had given of his intention of opposing the supplies; and in the course of some observations upon the change in Administration, took occasion to ask Mr. Canning what was his intention respecting the filling up of certain situations in the Government? and whether, previously to his having received the King's commands to form a Ministry, he had entered into negociations with the Whigs?

Mr. Canning spoke to the following effect:—It is not my intention, Sir, on this occasion to

detain the House many minutes; but as the honourable baronet rose professedly to put two questions to me relative to the state and formation of the Administration—though his ardour carried him, in so doing, into a wider range of topics than I dare say he originally contemplated—and as the honourable baronet had the usual courtesy to acquaint me beforehand that he had these questions to ask, I shall certainly answer them in a different tone from that which I adopted in replying to those which were put to me in a hostile manner, and without any previous notice. I wish to make this distinction clear, because I am anxious to have that conduct of mine, to which the honourable baronet refers on a former night, thoroughly understood. Before, however, I proceed to answer his questions, let me give him one caution. The honourable baronet's speech, so far from being confined to asking a question or two, was rather like a speech intended to lay the basis and foundation of a wide debate. If it be a part of his tactics to draw me into a speech in reply to his questions, in order that I may be precluded from again taking part in the debate, and vindicating myself from any animadversions that may be made upon me, I tell him, that in what I am now about to say, I shall not consider that I have exhausted the privilege of the House. The amount of the two grains of questions hidden in the honourable baronet's bushel of declamation seems to be this:—in the first place, he asks

substantially what is the condition of the Government, particularly with the view to the filling up of certain situations? My answer to this question shall be plain, and I hope courteous, but I am afraid not satisfactory to the honourable baronet. The same question has been put this evening to my right honourable friend (Mr. S. Bourne), and his answer having been unsatisfactory to the querist by whom it was propounded, and notice having been given by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Beaumont) of a formal discussion upon this very point, neither now, nor on any future day, until that motion is brought forward, will I utter one word upon the subject. That honourable gentleman, the member for Stafford, has, in a plain and manly way, declared—and I thank him for it—his determination to put an end to the disgusting mode—I use the word advisedly—the disgusting mode, I repeat, in which great questions are, night after night, brought before this House. I thank the honourable gentleman for the opportunity he will afford Government to explain itself, and for that debate I will reserve all I have to say. Neither courtesy nor taunts shall extort from me one single syllable till that promised motion comes forth. The second question, which is much the more important one, is to this effect:—"Did any negociation exist between those honourable members* by whose support I am honoured, and myself, for their coming into office at,

* The late Opposition.

during, or about the time of the dissolution of the structure of the old Government?" Though the honourable baronet has so strong an aversion to monosyllables—though "Yes" offended him the other day, I hope, he will now take "No" as a satisfactory and inoffensive answer. I should not do justice to others, however, if I omitted to say that I did know that in the event of my being placed at the head of the Government, I should have an accession of strength, not by the general admission of a great party to office, but by the disinterested support of some individuals of that party. On their part, it was directly contrary to a bargain for office. I received, unsought, a communication which assured me that there were some individuals, few in number, but very important by their weight and character, who were disposed to render me cordial, but expressly disinterested support. I should do them an act of unpardonable injustice if I concealed the fact, that when I was driven to straits in the formation of a Government, and when the question arose as to their introduction to office, it originated with me, and not with them. I have answered this question plainly, and I hope satisfactorily.

There was one observation made by the honourable baronet, on which I cannot refrain from making a passing comment. The honourable baronet seems to think it most extraordinary that any person should support a Government of which I am at the head, who agrees with me only as to the

Catholic Question, and differs with me as to Parliamentary Reform. In another part of his speech he had the goodness to say, that for twenty years, during which he had observed my public conduct, he had looked upon me with respect, and he said also with confidence. Now, I differ from the honourable baronet on both these subjects; and if he will look back to a particular night in the year 1822, which I well remember, when I brought forward my motion for the relief of the Roman Catholic Peers, the honourable baronet will find his present principle contradicted by his former practice. On that occasion, he cautioned the House not to be led away by my powers of persuasion, to any agreement with me, for that he himself had unwarily been led away to vote against parliamentary reform, of which he was the advocate, by a speech of mine a few evenings previously. Yet this was the honourable gentleman who, in the cast of parts for this night, was selected to express his surprise that I could act with any persons, or they with me, when they differed from me as to those questions. I take not the smallest offence, however, at any thing said by that honourable gentleman. I meet his courtesy with an equal degree of courtesy on my part. I am bound to give answers to those questions only which relate immediately to the conduct of the Government to which I belong; but I shall always be ready, when they may think fit to attack us, to meet either the honourable baronet

or his friend. [Mr. Beaumont, to whom this term was applied, signified his disapprobation of it.] I beg pardon, really, if I have given offence, but I meant none; I called them friends, because they are aiming at a similar purpose. I repeat, as my attention is again called to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Beaumont), that I thank him for the opportunity he has promised me of explaining fully and completely the high subjects of political interest to which he has referred, instead of wasting their importance in daily driblets of discussion, which can have no useful result or satisfactory termination.

After some further discussion on the late changes, the House proceeded to the Order of the Day.

NEWSPAPER STAMP DUTIES' BILL.

JUNE 1st, 1827.

Mr. Hume moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the Newspaper Stamp Duties' Bill, (66 Geo. 3. c. 9.) subjecting certain publications to the duties of stamps on newspapers. (The object and the policy of this bill will be found eloquently detailed in Mr. Canning's speech on the Newspaper Stamp Duties' Bill in the fifth volume of the present collection.)

The Attorney-General (Sir J. Scarlett) opposed the motion.

Mr. Canning then rose, and spoke to the following effect:—Although my honourable and

learned friend (the Attorney-General) has already, I believe, disposed of the question, and although he has left me but little to say upon the subject, yet, Sir, as I am anxious to state the grounds upon which it is my intention to resist the motion of the honourable member for Aberdeen (Mr. Hume), I will trouble the House with a few words. If, Sir, it be a binding rule that every member who has opposed any particular measure in its progress through this House, is bound to continue that opposition, and to support the repeal of that measure after it has passed into a law, the inevitable consequence must be, as the honourable gentleman concludes, that a partial change in the Administration ought to produce a partial change in measures, and that a total change in the Administration ought to produce a total change in measures, and that all preceding statutes should be swept away. But, Sir, the application of the honourable gentleman's (Mr. Hume) argument to my honourable and learned friend, in his capacity as a member of this House, is about as reasonable as another argument, which might be applied to him in a capacity in which he surpasses all other men,—in that of an advocate. The argument is, that when you have once engaged to exert your reasoning powers in defending a particular cause, although the jury may have decided against you, and although the judge may have declared his conviction of the correctness of their verdict, and although the country may have

repeated and ratified the decree, I will, nevertheless, bind you down to the sentiments which, upon that occasion, you have professed; I will hold you to your opening speech, and call upon you to repeat the opinions, which, in the discussion of the subject, you delivered, for the purpose of producing a particular decision. With respect to the Act which we are now called upon to repeal, I will say, Sir, that if our experience of it is to go for nothing—if its fixedness as a statute is to go for nothing—if the acquiescence of the whole country, from one end to the other, in its justness and expediency, is to go for nothing—if the oblivion of the whole country, the utter oblivion of the circumstances under which it was passed, is to go for nothing—I can at once perceive and acknowledge the expediency and the necessity of repealing that Act; but if not, Sir, I conceive that nothing can be more preposterous than the desire that we should go back, and call for its repeal, because it was vehemently opposed at its enactment. If, Sir, the operation of this Act had been found oppressive, or inconvenient to the public; if it had disappointed the just hopes repecting it that were entertained; or if, in curing evils of one description, it had produced evils of another description, and of greater magnitude, I should at once perceive the necessity for complying with the desire which has been expressed; but, under the existing circumstances, I cannot

but see that it is impossible. And now, Sir, after what has fallen from me with respect to the repealing of this Act, do I mean to say, that because certain acts are in our statute book, they are also to be immortal; no, Sir—but what I mean to say is, that the question of repeal must stand simply upon its own grounds, without reference to the opposition which the measure may have originally encountered, or to its success.

The question now before us, Sir, is not what the nature, or what the quality, or what the degree of opposition to the passing of the measure may have been, but whether there be in the law itself any thing positively noxious—whether there be in its operation any thing so absolutely mischievous, and intolerably inconvenient, as to make it imperative upon Parliament, at this precise moment, to decide upon its repeal. In favour of this proceeding, it has been argued, that because there existed a system of laws, some of which were perishable, those that were perishable ought to communicate their mortality to the rest. Now, Sir, really this argument is so extraordinary, and so inaccessible to my judgment, that I know not how to deal with it. If, Sir, all these laws had been made together, and if one of them had been afterwards repealed, and we were then called upon to repeal all those that remained, the case would be widely different. But, Sir, in the present instance, Parliament judged, after mature

deliberation, and after hearing arguments upon every side, that some of these Acts should be perpetual, while others, which had been rendered necessary merely by circumstances of a temporary nature, ought to expire with those circumstances from which they had derived their birth. With respect to those intended to be permanent, Parliament anticipated that difficulties might continue to exist, or might, after an interval, arise again, and, therefore, to avoid the necessity of again framing such, were anxious that they should remain upon the statute book; and, Sir, I will now ask the House, is there any thing so outrageously objectionable in this law at least? Are we loudly called upon by the voice of the country to repeal it? Why, Sir, the voice of the country never was so silent. If you wanted to obtain the popular opinion upon the subject, you would be obliged to travel from one end of the country to the other; and *tell* the people that such a law exists. And I will say, Sir, that a more wanton attempt at unnecessary excitement is not to be found in the whole history of parliamentary proceedings.

I shall now say a few words with respect to the liberty of the press, and the effect which this law is supposed to exercise upon it; and I will ask, Sir, if a foreigner who had, for the first time, placed his foot upon this soil—or even if an Englishman, who had been for (we will say), ten years absent from

home, was called upon to state what he considered to be the peculiar grievance under which we labour, would he answer, "Why nothing now is printed, nothing is said of any body by the press—there is a total stagnation of satirical jokes, of sarcasm and slander; there is no freedom of opinion; every body abstains from animadversions upon private character—every thing is sleeping or dead. The press is broken up—' it's occupation's gone;' there is no such thing now as type and paper?"—Now, Sir, I will just beg of you to consider for a moment, what is the great grievance of which the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) complains; and what is the end and object of the measure he proposes; and we will then see how the vacuum, which he laments so deeply, can be supplied. With this view, Sir, let us observe, what description of publications it is that this law is calculated to prevent. In the first place, they must be blasphemous. Well, let us have blasphemous publications by all means. In the second place, they cannot exceed two sheets. Let us, then, have two-sheeted blasphemous publications. In the next place, the author must value the produce of his brains under six-pence. Well, Sir, then let us have blasphemous, two-sheeted, under-sixpenny, publications. The honourable gentleman opposes the prevention of them upon general principles; he declares that prevention to be productive of a

great defect; and to supply this great, and melancholy, and deplorable defect, he calls upon all parties—upon those who had opposed, and upon those who had supported the measure which he deprecates—to lay their hands to the hallowed work of restoring to the eye of day those blasphemous, two-sheeted, vile-priced publications.

These are the essential qualities required to bring a publication within the meaning of the Act—namely, blasphemy, the size of two sheets, and the value of less than six-pence. These are the three objects which the Act is intended to repress, and by which the honourable member is of opinion that the general liberty of the press has been extinguished. To be sure, blasphemy is of a most volatile, changeable essence; but if any man wished to lay his hand upon that which restrained it, and was desirous to restore the freedom of the press, the object was not difficult to attain. I believe, Sir, I can inform the honourable member that there is a short course of proceeding. Let any gentleman, who is blasphemously disposed, and who has a stock of blasphemy upon hands that he is anxious to dispose of—let him to the two sheets add a third—let him, instead of an interval of twenty-six days between publication, take eight-and-twenty days—let him "screw his courage to the sticking place," and instead of sixpence, charge sixpence-

halfpenny, and he will evade the law. In fact, Sir, the only persons who would derive any, the least benefit from the repeal of this law, would be those who, with a disposition to blaspheme, were yet either too modest to think of publishing more than a second sheet, or possessed too tender a regard for the pockets of the public, to venture upon adding the additional halfpenny, which would free them from the prohibition under which they are restrained. For myself, Sir, I must say, that notwithstanding what has fallen from the honourable gentleman opposite, I do not consider the grievance to be one of first-rate magnitude, nor one under the infliction of which the people of England are made to writhe at present. I do not think, Sir, that there is at this moment that great deficiency of gross abuse and unlicensed vituperation, which would render it necessary for us to open a new sluice, by the repeal of this Act. I say I do not think this necessary, but at the same time, I will also declare my conviction, that there never was a period at which really useful information was circulated at so cheap a rate, or at which, by consequence, it was so widely diffused amongst the lowest classes in society. This, Sir, I consider the peculiar characteristic of these times, and in this I conceive they differ from those in which the Act was passed. By this Act all the advantages that can result from a freedom of publication are

left untouched, while it is purged from its gross impurities; and, Sir, highly valuing, as I do, the press, as the source of wholesome information, and of useful and salutary knowledge, I shall conclude by expressing my hope and trust, that the House will never consent to poison the healthful stream, by letting out a stream of vile pollution which has happily been dammed up.

The House divided,

For Mr. Hume's motion	10
Against it	120
Majority against it	110

THE BUDGET.

JUNE 1st, 1827.

Mr. Canning moved the order of the day for the House resolving itself into a Committee of Ways and Means.

The Speaker having left the Chair, at half-past five, the House resolved itself into a committee.

Mr. Canning then addressed the committee (Sir Alexander Grant in the Chair) to the following effect:—The task, Sir, which it is this day my duty to perform—difficult as it must be, under any circumstances, to a person who undertakes,

for the first time, to discharge it—is certainly not lightened by the consideration that the picture of our financial situation, which I have to present to the committee, is not one of unqualified prosperity. Undoubtedly, Sir, a sombre complexion has been thrown over the whole of that picture, by the dark spots which have settled on particular parts of it—and have in some quarters made a deeper impression, perhaps, than will be warranted, either by the opinions of this committee, or of the most intelligent observers out of this House;—for it is a consolation to me to find, that the nearer one approaches, and the more accurately one looks into it, the more ground one sees to hope that that complexion has been, in the opinion of the public, exaggerated. If there are grounds upon which we must admit that there is much to lament, and much to repair, in our present condition, there are, nevertheless, grounds for anticipations of its certain improvement. The financial situation of the country at this time, is assuredly one which requires to be looked at with a steady and scrutinizing eye; but in proportion as that scrutiny is minute and accurate, I am happy to think that we shall find in it the justification of sanguine hopes, that the result will be neither distant nor disheartening.

With no other preface, Sir, than this, (and I hope it will be taken, at least, as a proof of the sincerity with which I am disposed to deal on this subject

with the committee), I proceed to state, in the first instance, what was our precise financial situation at the end of the last year;—secondly, to combine and compare, as has been the habit of my noble friend, (Lord Goderich) my predecessor in this office, that one year with several years preceding; —and, lastly, to suggest the provision to be made for the current year, and to state the grounds upon which I feel myself authorised to look forward with undiminished confidence to the future.

Now, Sir, in stating the first and second of these heads—namely, our situation at the end of the last financial year, and our situation at the end of the year, combining and comparing it with the three preceding years—I shall go upon data, which every honourable gentleman who has looked to those papers which have lately been laid upon the table of the House, will be able at once to correct and verify. With respect to the third and fourth points—namely, the provision to be made for the present year, and the prospect for the future — I can only appeal to the existence of those impressions of which I have already spoken, and to the declaration I have already made as to the sincerity with which I mean to deal with the committee on these matters, to obtain from the committee their belief that it is not my intention either to keep back any thing which ought to be brought forward, or to carry them into any subject which it would be wrong to introduce, and, finally,

to assure them that I shall press upon them no opinion which I do not honestly and sincerely entertain myself.

To begin, then, Sir, with the first head to which I propose to call the committee's attention, namely, the financial situation of the country at the end of the year 1826. At the end of the year 1826, after balancing the income and expenditure of that year, there remained an actual surplus of income towards the charge of the Sinking Fund of £1,000,000. The amount applicable by law to the Sinking Fund was, however, for that year, £5,500,000. There was, therefore, an apparent deficiency in this respect of £4,500,000. I say, Sir, "an apparent deficiency," because from that deficit are to be deducted two sums which go considerably to reduce its amount. The first of these sums is the aggregate of advances made from the Exchequer Fund, under several Acts of Parliament, either for public works in Great Britain and Ireland, or for the purchase of beneficial interests, which are not only likely, but certain, to make a more than adequate return to the public. It is quite obvious that sums laid out in this manner, and for the repayment of which the claims of the revenue are available and outstanding, are not items from which can fairly be inferred the character of the expenditure of any particular year. This aggregate of advances arises, in part, on the balance of advances over repayments which took place in that year, to the

amount of £1,200,000. The particulars of those advances are stated in a paper which has been laid before the House; and I will, therefore, spare the time of the committee, by not detaining them unnecessarily upon the contents of a document to which every honourable gentleman has access, and upon which he may immediately satisfy himself. To this balance of advances over repayments, then, is to be added another sum, arising out of the circumstance, that in the course of 1826, there were other over-payments of this kind; or payments on account of expences not incurred in that year, but defrayed out of its income, and which were made in amount to another £1,200,000. The items of this amount also are to be found in another paper, which has been laid upon the table. These two sums of £1,200,000 each, being deducted from the £4,500,000 that I have before stated as the deficiency of that year, upon the amount applicable by law to the Sinking Fund, decrease the amount of such deficiency to £2,100,000.

Such, then, Sir, was the state of our finances at the end of the last year; but, before we take that as the measure of the financial ability, still more, before we take that as the proof of the financial embarrassments of the country, it will be fit and proper for me to resort to that process to which, as I have before said, my noble predecessor constantly resorted—that of combining the particular year with the preceding years, of

taking an average upon the whole, and of drawing an inference from the aggregate amount of income and expenditure. Sir, it is now just four years since the Sinking Fund was laid on its present more simple basis. These four years, therefore, seem naturally to form that period which it is proper to combine, in order to arrive at a general result, or average, in the first instance.

Now, taking these four years, 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, the results are as follow:

The total income was £229,204,261, or, in round numbers, £230,000,000.

The expenditure of the same years, exclusive of the Sinking Fund, was £209,242,184, or say, in round numbers again, £210,000,000.

The surplus of income, after providing for advances, &c. for those four years, which remained towards the appropriation to be made to the Sinking Fund, was £19,962,077; say as before, £20,000,000.

The total aggregate income of the four years therefore was something less than £230,000,000, namely, £229,204,261. The total expenditure of the four years was somewhat less than £210,000,000, namely, £209,242,184. The surplus remaining towards the Sinking Fund, therefore, was almost within a fraction of £20,000,000.

The amount of Sinking Fund, which was by law applicable to the National Debt, during the same four years, was about £21,227,675; leaving an

apparent deficiency, upon the whole of the four years, of income applicable to the discharge of the whole expenditure of the country (Sinking Fund included), of £1,265,688: but, against this apparent deficiency are to be placed, as I have before taken the liberty of pointing out, two sums appearing on the accounts for those years. For these—the amounts of advances made from the Exchequer, under different Acts of Parliament, either for loans or for public works, or for beneficial purchases, and of which the public are in possession as available securities;—these, as I contend, it would be unjust to consider as forming part of the expenditure of the particular year in which they occurred. The amount of excess of advances beyond repayment during the four years in question, was £2,371,588. From this amount deduct one million and a quarter, or, to speak more precisely, £1,265,688, the excess of expenditure in the same four years, including Sinking Fund; and there remains upon those four years, of real surplus income, an amount of £1,105,900, after defraying all expences, and providing for the Sinking Fund for the same period as I have before mentioned. I come now to state what is, of course, matter of estimate—the income and expenditure of the present year. 1827—

The estimated income of the country for the year 1827, is..... £54,600,000

The estimated expenditure, exclusive of the Sinking Fund, is.....	51,764,000
The Sinking Fund, applicable to the debt during the present year, amounts to.....	5,700,000

Add this Sinking Fund to the expenditure, and the total demand for the expenditure of the present year will be £57,464,000, being more than the estimated income, (and, I am sorry to say, considerably more than two millions). Before I come to consider this amount of expenditure, I wish to deal with the general subject in the way I have promised to the committee, and to give to the House a view of what will be the result of a comparison of the current year, with the whole of the four preceding years, supposing the whole of this estimate to be founded on *data* as correct as those on which the income and expenditure of such preceding years have been calculated. The income of the four years, severally ending on 5th January, 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, I have already stated at £230,000,000; but as, in adding the current year to this statement, it is necessary to do so without taking any notice of Exchequer advances and repayments—as the advances and repayments for this year, of course, cannot, at present be looked to—I omit in this statement so much of the preceding year's income as accrued from repayments of advances, and so much of its expenditure as grew out of grants and loans.

The income of the four years just named, therefore, exclusive of advances and repayments, amounted to £228,000,000.

The estimated income of 1827, is £54,600,000.

The total of the actual and estimated income of those last four years, and this current year, taken together, will be £282,600,000.

The expenditure of the last four years, in like manner, exclusive of advances and repayments, was £205,667,000.

The expenditure of the present year, exclusive of the Sinking Fund, is estimated at £51,810,000, making together, a total for the five years of £257,477,000.

The difference between the aggregate of income, for these five years, and the aggregate of expenditure, we may take at £25,123,000, and something more.

The legal claim of the Sinking Fund, comes next to be taken into consideration.

The Sinking Fund by law amounted, in the years 1823, 1824, 1825, and 1826, to £21,227,763. The same legal claim in the current year, is £5,700,000, making in the whole the sum of £26,927,763, and consequently leaving a deficiency of income on the five years, to meet the Sinking Fund required by law, of £1,804,763.

I beg the committee clearly to understand that this £1,804,763 is the deficiency for the five years, and is not to be confounded with the deficiency, under the same head, for the current year, and

which is to be provided for out of its own resources. Why, then, before I come to deal with the income and expenditure of the present year, more particularly, I would observe, that it appears from this retrospective view of our finances, that the total amount of deficiency of income, up to the end of the current year, as combined with the results of the four preceding years, will be something under £2,000,000;—a deficiency, say, of £2,000,000,—arising on an expenditure of nearly £300,000,000, spread over a period of five years. Sir, I do not at all mean to say that, even at such a deficiency, this House and this country should feel satisfied; but, I confess that it is a much smaller excess of expenditure over income than my own apprehensions had been led to anticipate—much smaller, I think, than it has been occasionally assumed to be by those who have devoted much of their attention to these matters; and much less than it had been very generally conceived to be.

I am, however, aware it may be said, that there is a fallacy which pervades the whole of this estimate, arising from that head of these accounts, which is generally designated by the name of dead-weight.

I thus allude to it, with no intention of mentioning it opprobriously, but merely because it has become familiar to us all by that name. But I think, Sir, it is an entire mistake to consider that

operation, to whatever other objections it may be liable on other accounts, as in the smallest degree falsifying this estimate—and, I will tell the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) who cheered me just now, why, I am perfectly ready to admit —and, indeed, the fact is perfectly notorious, and has long been conceded—that that operation has had the effect of obscuring and complicating the public accounts. From that very circumstance, perhaps, it has arisen, that this scheme has been made to bear more of blame than really belongs to it. But in this particular case, it has not only not operated badly for the country, but, in fact, has proved of great advantage to it. The contribution for the last four years, for the Commissioners of Naval Half-pay and Pensions, has amounted to £7,600,000; but, gentlemen must not forget that, when this plan was established, yearly taxes, to the amount of two millions annually, were repealed; and before it is assumed, by any honourable member, that the addition of this £7,600,000 produces an exaggerated appearance of income—he ought, for his purpose, to compare the produce of those contributions with what would have been the produce of the taxes I speak of, which were repealed only because this system of contribution was imposed. The amount, I say, of the taxes repealed at the same time that this contribution was established, was something more than two millions per annum,

and during the same period in which the dead weight contribution has yielded to the income of the country, £7,600,000, these taxes, if they had continued unrepealed, (which, by hypothesis, would have been the case, inasmuch as the temptation to the House to sanction the scheme of that contribution was, the enabling it to arrive at the repeal of such taxes,) would have yielded about £8,240,000. So far, therefore, from the account of the public income being unfairly swelled by the dead weight, that account shows a total of £640,000 less than it would otherwise have amounted to, by reason of the dead weight having been substituted for the taxes alluded to. All this, of course, does not affect the merits of that scheme in any other respect—it does not cure the scheme of the evils of that obscurity and that complexity which, as I have stated, it introduced into our accounts. But, of the charge of inflaming the accounts of the income of the country, and of giving a false view of our affairs, that scheme is totally guiltless; for I repeat, that if that scheme had never been established, the income of the country would have appeared, on these accounts, £640,000 on the aggregate better than it actually does. This charge, or rather the absence of this charge—that is to say, the continuance of these taxes, if they had remained, instead of being repealed, and if the dead weight had not been called to our aid — would have

reduced the general balance against the country from £1,800,000 to £1,200,000. But this, Sir, is not the opportunity at which I shall enter into the merits and demerits of that scheme generally. I must frankly own that I myself was not fully cognizant of its merits or its demerits, until it became my duty to look into these accounts; and I am perfectly sure that a like ignorance, or a like recklessness, upon that subject, prevails among those who have not directed their attention to it with equal anxiety. But we must not blind ourselves to this circumstance, that we have obtained from it, during the last four years, very substantial advantages. And when we revert, as, perhaps, we may, at no distant time, to an examination of this point—when we come to reconsider the question of this scheme, we shall find that if it is not one of plain sailing, it is not one, which has not on each side compensating advantages and disadvantages. Assuredly, we shall gain much, by simplifying the national accounts;—we shall gain more, perhaps, by the consciousness of meeting our difficulties, whatever they are, full in the face; but we shall do that, by the necessity of taking up, in some shape or other, a part of the burden which we laid down when this scheme was resorted to, and from which burden we have been relieved during the last four years. I mention this, without pledging myself to any specific measure, that, on my own part, I may feel it neces-

sary to bring forward; but as imploring only that the House will not forget what they will have to do, if they should return to that condition in which they were when this scheme was originated.

The committee will not have failed to observe, that in all I have stated to them, I have assumed, as a fixed point, the fact, if not the expediency, of the expence of the Sinking Fund —a fund which, by whatever name you please to call it, whether Sinking Fund or Sinking Expenditure, is to have the effect of preserving national faith and national credit, and enabling the country to meet the fluctuations of its revenue, and to meet also any unforeseen emergencies in which it may unawares be placed. The present year, Sir, affords examples of both these necessities; it affords the example of our revenue suddenly falling off, and it affords, too, an example of a particular foreign exigency coming on us unawares. And here I would wish the House to consider what would be the situation of a country which would so exactly square its annual income with its estimated expenditure as to leave no room for these emergencies, nor any provision (as every private gentleman is bound to provide, by laying aside some part of his own income, for unforeseen casualties) to meet claims which cannot be exactly anticipated. What should be the amount of the Sinking Fund, this

is not the time exactly to discuss; but I confess it has never occurred to me, that a sum less than five millions, on an expenditure of more than fifty millions, is a proportion that, either by our own parliamentary experience, or looking to the analogies of private life, can with prudence be provided. Here, again, I beg not to be considered as giving any decided opinion. I told the committee, at the outset, that I would declare candidly the considerations which have impressed themselves on my mind; but this will be a subject for discussion in the year to come, and upon which we shall have had the benefit, not only of all the reflections of the intervening period, and the experience of current events, but shall look to the aid of the proposed Finance Committee.

For the present year, then, the question which arises on the statements I have submitted to the Committee—the question which they will have specifically to consider, is, whether that deficiency, which I have already stated in round numbers, though it is now, and I think we have every prospect of further proof of this hereafter, considerably less than I have stated it at, whether that deficiency should be provided for by any extraordinary means, or whether, under the particular circumstances of this year, it may not be the more expedient course to take a credit on the Consolidated Fund, and leave it to the year to come to determine what it may be necessary to do, of a more

decisive and more extraordinary nature. This is, in other words, of course, a proposal to add to the Exchequer Bills now outstanding. And the first question that arises on the suggestion of such a proposal is, whether the amount of those Bills now outstanding be such as will bear this hypothetical accumulation, or whether it be such as to render it dangerous to run the risk of going on to increase it. The price at which Exchequer Bills are now selling, is equivalent to a premium of fifty shillings on every £100; that £100 producing three per cent. per annum, and such being the premium, upon this statement at least there is no appearance of an overstocked or a labouring market. Then, Sir, as to the amount, the whole amount of Exchequer Bills now outstanding, is £23,800,000. That amount would be increased, supposing the whole of the sum, now apparently deficient, to remain deficient at the end of the year—that is, supposing the revenue to go on only at the rate at which it has during the four months last past—supposing all the indications, I will not say, Sir, of reviving prosperity, but of reviving activity in commerce, which we hear from all parts of the country—supposing the information on this subject, which has been communicated to so many honourable gentlemen to be quite erroneous—supposing, then, all these premises to be totally fallacious—supposing, in fact, the very worst, the whole outstanding amount would be £26,700,000;

but I think I may say, without even offering any direct authority for the assertion, that it is impossible, from the various but concurrent information which have reached so many honourable gentlemen from all parts of the country; it is impossible to believe the two propositions I have suggested—I mean, that the progress of the revenue will not be to be accelerated during the remainder of the year, beyond the rate at which it has proceeded during the last four months; and that the deficiency in the public revenue will not be diminished by the accelerated ratio of improvement in our commercial affairs. I say, it is impossible to believe these two propositions, without entirely disbelieving all these accounts from all parts of the country. Why, then, Sir, I may consider £26,000,000, as the amount of outstanding bills at the current year. Suppose I were to rely on that resource for squaring our accounts at the end of the year, I think I am not too sanguine in taking that as the total amount. Now, £26,000,000 of outstanding Exchequer Bills is a less amount of such bills than ever was outstanding at any period, as I am informed, in the history of this country, during the last twenty years; that is to say, not the amount now outstanding, but the amount, such as it would be, if to the amount now outstanding were added the deficiency of the present year's income. But there is still another consideration, to which I have already partially adverted, in stating the amounts of the incomes

and expenditures of different years, and which it is very material that the committee should take into its view aggregately, and consider its bearing upon the whole. Of this £26,000,000 outstanding Exchequer Bills, one-fifth, at least, is of a totally different nature also from Exchequer Bills, in the ordinary and general sense of the term. The aggregate of advances in Exchequer Bills which have been made by the Government, and remain due to them now, is upwards of £5,000,000; £5,000,000 therefore, of this amount of Exchequer Bills represent not the credit of the Government, but advances for public works, loans, &c. They are, in fact, available securities, and convertible by the Government at their pleasure. This circumstance, consequently, will reduce the amount of outstanding Exchequer Bills, in the ordinary sense of the word, even on the most unfavourable supposition of our having to replace the whole apparent deficiency of this year by that mode of security, to £21,000,000, which is, as I have said, considerably less, of course, than has ever been their amount at any period of that term of twenty years which I have mentioned, being by £500,000 less than the sum I have predicated as below the average amount of such outstanding bills in all that period.

Under these circumstances, when I put to myself the question, whether or not we can run the risk, whatever that may be, of having to

defray the deficiency in the income, to meet the expenditure of the current year, by an addition to the now outstanding Exchequer Bills of the amount I have stated; and comparing this risk with the possible effect of any other mode of proceeding for such deficiency; I confess, Sir, I am strongly inclined to the course which I at first suggested. The state in which the country is now, appears to me to be one of a hopeful, but not confirmed, convalescence, and I do trust and believe, that it will gather strength, and proceed gradually to the reinstatement of its former power and former security—I mean, of course, its financial security—provided it be not, at this critical moment, either tampered with by the application of any unnecessary remedies, or afflicted by the shock of any measure which may divert it from the healthful course in which it now gradually, but steadily, proceeds. I see, Sir, also, indications of an improving revenue. I am not sufficiently sanguine to believe that this improvement will be great enough, for the present, to overtake the whole of the deficiency. A part, however, of that deficiency I am sanguine enough to expect speedily to see cut off by natural means; and that hope we should be wrong to disappoint, by any measures calculated to force results, that, by being so forced, may defeat it. It will be wise for us to await the realization or the disappointment of that hope, before we decide on any other

course of action. If I were to decide for myself, as to whether I should adopt a course like this which I advocate, without the advantage of previously consulting Parliament upon it, I should unquestionably feel the responsibility of so proceeding too great for me to undertake. But, Sir, it is because I have the opportunity of stating in this House, plainly and openly, the course itself, and the motives which prompt it—it is because there is nothing of fraud or falsehood in it—nothing of keeping back—nothing of concealment—nothing of a desire to represent things otherwise than as they are—that I have the courage to express my conviction that in the present peculiar situation of the country, it is better to wait and to expect, than imprudently to aid even her financial progress. I have now opened, Sir, rather those general principles which ought to guide us in our present situation, than entered into any particular details connected with it; and I think the peculiar character of the times justifies me in having adopted such a mode of proceeding, in preference to going into a multiplicity of such details—into calculations of revenue—into calculations of trade—which might have only more perplexed a subject that, I am much afraid, my inexperience in these matters has already sufficiently obscured. On the other hand, I trust I have explained, without much complication, that which it was my single object to make clear and

perspicuous to the committee, as it seemed better to propound that single object to them distinctly and intelligibly, than to carry them through a succession of small items. Nothing now remains for me to submit to the committee, but to state the supply by ways and means; as, according to the principle which I have just ventured to lay down, I propose providing, in no other way but from a credit on the Consolidated Fund, for the deficiency of the present year. The supplies which have been voted for the current year, are as follow:—

Army	£8,194,466
Navy	6,125,800
Ordnance	1,649,917
Miscellaneous	2,275,034
Interest on Exchequer Bills	620,000
Making an aggregate of	£18,865,217

In addition to this amount, before the rising of Parliament it will be my duty to call on the House for a vote of credit, the object of which I shall then explain to the House to be, to prepare for any unforeseen contingencies that may arise, relative to the army. The accounts which have been laid on table, as to the ways and means, show as follow:—

Supplies of last year's income	£880,000
Military and Naval Pensions	4,155,000

Debt from the East-India Company, partly on account of their share in the charge of Military Pensions, &c., and partly on account of Naval Expences in the East-Indies during the late war.....	100,000
Duties on Sugars and Personal Estates	3,000,000

And I also propose to move for a vote from the consolidated fund to cover all deficiencies. The deficiency to be provided for the year is, altogether, £2,864,000. The vote of credit which I must move for, will be £500,000. The main principle on which the committee will have to decide, is, whether, under all the circumstances of the country, it will be content, as I think the most prudent course will be, to go on thus through the whole of this year, not in ignorance, but with a perfect knowledge of the situation of the country, and, looking to the growing effects of returning prosperity;—whether it will not be far better than entering upon unadvisable and premature discussion of every one of those great questions of finance, which await their discussion next year—whether to go on in the path I have pointed out will not be our wiser policy, rather than to run the risk of deranging the present course of things, without having any correct means of judging what the effect of such derangement may be. It will be

found that the supply of this year exceeds that of the last, by about £800,000. The difference or amount of that excess arises from two heads: the army extraordinaries, and the vote of credit. A great part of this sum must be referred to the extraordinary demands of our army abroad. But I am far from binding myself to say, that to bring back the expenditure of the country to the scale of the expenditure of last year, is all that I should expect to be able to accomplish, or all that the Government is inclined to do. I am afraid to indulge in promises, because promises that are made under similar circumstances, must, from the nature of things, be contingent on events which we cannot controul; because, too, they are always exaggerated by those to whom they are made, and, however they may be more than fulfilled by the event, may, in some quarters, furnish matter of crimination and reproach.

All I can say, therefore, is, that it is the fixed determination of His Majesty's Government to apply to these important subjects—the reduction of the expenditure and the improvement of the revenue—their best and zealous efforts, and to call on this House to council on these matters. This is all that, under existing circumstances, the House can expect, or Ministers hope to accomplish. My decided opinion, in conclusion, is, and I feel that I ought to give it fairly before I sit down, that the course I recommend

is the most expedient and the wisest. The country is in a state at present rather to be left to itself than even to be aided in its return to prosperity. And if I entertain, as undoubtedly I do, a sanguine hope that the time is not very far distant when the prosperity of the country may be more unequivocally demonstrated than it has lately been, I found that hope rather on its known intrinsic energies, and its inherent, though not now put forth, powers, than I do upon any indication arising from particular circumstances, which I could fairly turn to, as justifying that hope. I would rather express what I feel on this subject in other words than my own—in words that I am sure the committee will pardon me, if I read on this occasion, in preference to submitting the same views in any language that I can supply. The speech I am about to quote from was one which beautifully described the energies of this empire, and the operation of that spirit and enterprise for which it is distinguished, in communicating the commercial activity and wealth of its own people to the most distant regions.

The right honourable gentleman then read the following extract:—

. . . . . .

"But there is still another cause, even more satisfactory than these, because it is of a still more extensive and permanent nature, that constant accumulation of capital, that continual tendency

to increase, the operation of which is universally seen, in a greater or less proportion, whenever it is not obstructed by some public calamity, or by some mistaken and mischievous policy, but which must be conspicuous, and rapid indeed in any country which has once arrived at an advanced state of commercial prosperity. Simple and obvious as this principle is, and felt and observed, as it must have been in a greater or less degree, even from the earliest periods, I doubt whether it has ever been fully developed, and sufficiently explained—but in the writings of an author of our own times, now unfortunately no more, whose extensive knowledge of detail, and depth of philosophical research, will, I believe, furnish the best solution to every question connected with the history of commerce, or with the system of political economy. This accumulation of capital arises from the continual application, of a part at least, of the profit obtained in each year, to increase the total amount of capital to be employed in a similar manner, and with continued profit in the year following. The great mass of the property of the nation is thus constantly increasing at compound interest; the progress of which, in any considerable period, is what, at first view, would appear incredible. Great as have been the effects of this cause already, they must be greater in future, for its powers are augmented in proportion as they are exerted. It acts with a velocity

continually accelerated, with a force continually increased.

"Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo."

It may, indeed, as we have ourselves experienced, be checked or retarded, by particular circumstances—it may, for a time, be interrupted, or even overpowered; but where there is a fund of productive labour and active industry, it can never be totally extinguished. In the season of the severest calamity and distress, its operations will still counteract and diminish their effects—in the first returning interval of prosperity it will be active to repair them. If we look to a period like the present, of continued tranquillity, the difficulty will be to imagine limits to its operation. None can be found, while there exists at home any one object of skill or industry short of its utmost possible perfection—one spot of ground in the country, capable of higher cultivation and improvement, or while there remains abroad any new market that can be explored, or any existing market that can be extended. From the intercourse of commerce, it will, in some measure, participate in the growth of other nations, in all the possible varieties of their situations. The rude wants of countries emerging from barbarism, and the artificial and increasing demands of luxury and refinement, will equally open new sources of treasure, and new fields of exertion in

every state of society, and in the remotest quarters of the globe. It is this principle which, I believe, according to the uniform result of history and experience, maintains in the whole, in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune, and the disasters of empires, a continued course of successive improvement in the general order of the world.

"Such are the circumstances which appear to me to have contributed most immediately to our present prosperity."

The right honourable gentleman concluded thus:—

These words, Sir, are Mr. Pitt's; the authority cited is Dr. Adam Smith. He clearly says, that the application of philosophy to politics is not innovation. This was in 1792, and I, Sir, am content to go back to 1792, and take those words of Mr. Pitt into my own mouth, and proclaim them to Parliament, as those which shall be the guide and polar star of my political course.

VOTE OF CREDIT—PORTUGAL.

JUNE 8th, 1827.

Mr. Canning* this day in a Committee of Supply moved that the following gracious Message from the King should be read:—

"George R.

"His Majesty, deeming it expedient to provide for any additional expence which may arise on account of His Majesty's forces in Portugal, and relying on the experienced zeal and affection of his faithful Commons, trusts that they will make provisions accordingly. "G. R."

As soon as the Message was read, the right honourable gentleman stated that the causes which induced His Majesty to determine on sending British troops to Portugal, though diminished in their operation, still existed in sufficient force to render the continuance of our army in Portugal necessary. The mere act of sending out troops to Portugal had anticipated, met, and repelled the danger of ruin which threatened that country. The danger had been repelled, not by actual hostilities, but by the mere presence of British troops on the soil of Portugal. He would not pretend to say that there had not been differences and variations of councils on the part of the Spanish Government, which had threatened the renewal of the same dangers; but he was now happy to state that the tendency of the King of Spain's councils was less dangerous, and that the

country might look forward to a speedy adjustment of the differences between the two kingdoms, and the removal of the causes of them. As to the sojourn of our troops in Portugal, the House would perceive that it might be prudent to keep them there, not only until the danger was repressed, but until the probability of its recurrence was prevented. The prolongation of the stay of our troops rested on the very same grounds as those on which they had been sent there; and not upon any new causes, intentions, or dispositions whatsoever. These causes he had already fully explained, and he would, therefore, at present, conclude by moving that a sum, not exceeding £500,000, be granted to His Majesty, to provide for any additional contingent expences on behalf of the British forces in Portugal.

* * * * * *

Mr. Canning in reply to the observations of several speakers, declared that the expedition to Portugal had been sent out to uphold existing institutions, and not to establish new ones; and assigned the existence of positive treaties as the ground for our interference in the case of Portugal—whereas there was no treaty to warrant the interference of England in the invasion of Spain in 1823—he further stated that both the English and Portuguese Commissariats were engaged in making disbursements. If in the course of this co-operation, a balance should appear in the accounts in favour of this country, to that amount there would be a claim on Portugal. On a former occasion, such a balance appeared in favour of England, and he begged leave to remind the House that it had been most honourably discharged.

The resolution was agreed to.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

JUNE 12th, 1827.

Mr. Hume, on the bringing up of the Report of the Committee of Ways and Means observed, that as the financial arrangements of the country had been put off until next year, and as every thing was to be deferred until the appointment of a Finance Committee next Session, it was necessary the House should be informed when that Committee was to be appointed. Honourable gentlemen were aware, that according to a rule recently established in that House, the estimates were to be laid on the table about the 15th of February; or, in other words, fourteen days after the meeting of the House, which was generally on or about the 1st of that month. If the Committee was not to meet until that time, then the present heavy expenditure of the country could not be reduced in the interim.

* * * *

He now wished to know, whether it was the intention of Ministers to call Parliament together in November, in order to appoint this Committee, so that they might have time to make the necessary preparation for their inquiries?

Mr. Canning* said he was sure the House would agree with him in thinking that it was wholly impossible to answer the honourable member's question, as to when His Majesty should be advised to convene Parliament after the approaching prorogation—a question which, he would venture to say, was unprecedented in that House.

In objecting to this question, he wished to add, that he also differed from the inference which the honourable member seemed to draw from the non-appointment of the Finance Committee before next year; namely, that before that period Ministers would not turn their minds to a reduction of expenditure. He assured the honourable member, that from the moment they had time to turn their minds to the subject, every reduction in their power should be made, without waiting for the Committee; from the labours of which, however, when appointed, much might naturally be expected. He hoped the honourable member would feel satisfied with this balance between a refusal to answer his first question and the inference which he seemed to draw from a supposition that the Committee was not to be appointed before next February.

Mr. Hume said, he was perfectly satisfied with the answer he had received; an answer which fully justified him in putting the question he had put to the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Resolutions were then agreed to, and leave given to bring in a bill pursuant to them.

PEOPLE OF COLOUR.

JUNE 13th, 1827.

Dr. Lushington presented a petition from the Freeholders of the mixed race—the free inhabitants of the Island of Jamaica.

The principal allegations—as matter of complaint—contained in the petition, were—

" That when the right of conquest had rendered the country of their birth a dependency of the British empire, King Charles II., in the thirteenth year of his reign, by a Charter of Liberties and Franchises to the settlers in the colony, declared that ' the children of his subjects of England to be born in Jamaica should, from their respective births, be reputed to be, and should be, free denizens of England, holding the same privileges, to all intents and purposes, as the free-born subjects of England,' thus assuring to them the full enjoyment of those inherent rights which no climate or compact was to diminish or destroy.

" That although this inheritance of every immunity incident to British freedom, was thus confirmed to the Settlers, to be perpetuated in their free offspring, born in the Island, yet at an early period in the history of the representative Legislature of the colony, their descendants, the mixed issue of the European and the Black population, were disinherited of all the rights and liberties recognised in that charter, the object of which was to preserve unimpaired the Constitution of the parent state, and to render inviolable the ancient jurisdictions, liberties, and privileges of the people.

" That although thus excluded, by local policy, from the lowest offices of the State, divested of the privileges of citizenship, disqualified for exercising the functions of jurors, disinherited of the elective franchise, and disallowed the right of testimony in courts of law, yet, under all these jealous restrictions, this class of the community, nevertheless, advanced in wealth and respectability.

" That the influence which the acquisition of opulence was calculated to create, being deemed hostile to the maxims of colonial policy, this class of inhabitants, by

express enactments of the local Legislature, were shut out from all places of trust, even among themselves, and of gainful employment among others, in the commerce and agriculture of the country; and that, finally, in the year 1761, the distinction of poverty was more effectually added to that of the physical circumstances of birth, by debarring the mixed and black people from receiving bequests, or of making purchases to a greater extent than two thousand pounds, current money of Jamaica, or to the value of fourteen hundred pounds sterling.

"That although your petitioners have been repeatedly applauded as a meritorious class of His Majesty's subjects, by the House of Assembly of Jamaica, that House, in reply to the prayer of this petition, expressed their determination that the further Legislative claims of the general body should be rejected; declaring their intention to entertain only individual applications, duly recommended for special privileges, to be limited according to the condition and circumstances of the party applying; thus denying to your petitioners any general advantages from those plans for the benefit of the subject for which Legislative Assemblies are established, and divesting themselves, as it were, of their own deliberative character, by refusing to entertain any proposition for the future and collective good of this class of the people.

"That, born under the King's allegiance, and entitled to participate in the blessings of the British Constitution, and having evinced on all occasions their loyalty and patriotism, your petitioners look to your honourable House with the utmost solicitude, and with confidence that you will listen to their prayer, and not refuse to admit them to the full protection of the law, and all the privileges of British subjects.

"That your petitioners fervently pray your honourable

House will take the premises into your consideration, and, in your wisdom, adopt such measures as shall remedy the evils of which they complain—furnish to them new incitements to ingenuity and enterprise—ameliorate their condition—and promote their moral and intellectual improvement, and by thus enlarging their means of usefulness, add to the security, and augment the force and riches of the community at large.

"With the assurances of undeviating zeal for the support of His Majesty's Throne and Government, your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray," &c. &c.

Mr. Canning* said:—As no question had been raised to excite even a difference of opinion, this debate might have closed with the remarks in reply of the honourable and learned mover (Dr. Lushington), who had so fairly and temperately introduced the subject of discussion. In justice to the honourable member for Surrey (Mr. Palmer), however, it was necessary to say, that his speech had not left the impression upon his mind which it seemed to have made upon that of the honourable member for Winchelsea (Mr. Brougham). He did not understand that honourable member as defending, but as lamenting the system—not as contending that it ought to be permanent, but regretting the slow progress of improvement. He confessed he rather augured from the honourable member's language, a fair disposition to meet this part of the subject with a desire, as far as human means could accomplish it, to get rid of all possible difficulties. But the speech of the honourable member for Norwich (Mr. W. Smith), and particularly the fact with which he had concluded, proved still more strongly how much ought to be left to time and circumstances. If once an adverse disposition were created, it might be found impossible to accomplish the object. The honourable member for Norwich had quoted a familiar

letter, giving an account of a union, or rather of what the French called a *mésalliance* between a man of colour and a white woman, which was termed buying a white woman, and which had diffused general disgust as a monstrous atrocity. This fact established the enormous difficulty of the subject; it was inherent in the nature of the thing, and no proceeding of the Legislature could precipitate its removal. The advocates for acceleration adopted, before the Senate of Great Britain, the reasoning of *Shylock* before the Senate of Venice:—

> " You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
> Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
> You use in abject and in slavish parts,
> Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
> Let them be free—marry them to your heirs ?"

It was easy to say, " let them be free—marry them to your heirs;" but the thing was now impossible, and it might be long before the time arrived when it should be possible. He was not of opinion, however, that justice was impartially administered, and here it might be very fit to exercise authority, if without the exercise of it the object could not be accomplished. It was one thing to combat prejudice, nature, and an order of things that could not be controuled, and another to plant human institutions for the purpose of correcting human evil, and producing human good. The first was the resource of legislation, the last the province of manners; and the error arose from not observing the due limits of both, from not marking the difference between grievances which the Legislature could remedy, and those which must be left to a slower process. He concurred with the honourable member for Winchelsea, that it was impossible justice should be done, unless the

prejudices of the colonists were not broken down, but acted upon, first trying the power and willingness of the local Legislature, and interposing with the higher power of Parliament, if it were found necessary. The whites in one island had been stated at 25,000, the blacks at 360,000; and there were besides 30,000 neutrals, whom the governing part of the society might win to themselves by indulgence and conciliation, and whom it would be absolute madness, and the most incredible folly, with their eyes open, not to conciliate, and thereby gain a most important acquisition. He would leave to the colonies the means of attaining this object as fast as they could, by a conquest of prejudice, but he would exact from them the removal of positive evil. In due time, if they did not remove it themselves, it must be removed for them.

The Petition was ordered to be printed.

THE CORN AMENDMENT BILL.

JUNE 18th, 1827.

Mr. WESTERN moved the following Resolutions:—

"That it is the opinion of this Committee, that so much of the Act of the 3d Geo. IV. c. 60, relating to the importation of Corn, as renders the provisions of those Acts dependant on the admission of foreign wheat for home consumption, under the provisions of the Act of the 55th Geo. III. c. 26, should be repealed.

"That the scale of prices at which the home consumption of foreign corn, meal, wheat, or flour, is admitted by the said Act of the 55th Geo. III., shall cease and determine; and that thenceforth all and every the provisions of the said Act of 3d Geo. IV., shall be in force, the same as if they had not been made dependent upon the admission of foreign wheat for home consumption under the said Act of the 55th Geo. III."

Mr. CANNING rose and said:—Sir, the first observation I shall make upon the speech of the honourable member is, that I consider the tone and manner which he has introduced his motion, exactly suited to the great question which he brings under our discussion—a question involving deeply the interests as well of the agriculturalists as of the community at large. I beg to assure the honourable member, that I shall address myself to the question in the same tone; and whatever may be the future opinions on matters not strictly relevant to his motion, which I may feel it right, in justice to myself, to others, and to the King's Government, to express, I shall abstain from all allusion at present to them, not because I do not feel the provocation, but because I do not think this the most proper time, for the expression of those opinions.—Sir, I can conceive no species of faction more inexcusable, more blameable, or more wicked, than that which would make a subject touching the interests, and involving the prosperity of the whole community, a ground for exciting

party feelings, or exasperating political animosities. With respect to the motion of the honourable gentleman, I may be allowed to say, that the honourable gentleman has not assigned any reason to justify the terms of it; and next I must say, that I do not think that his proposition is one at all calculated to meet those disagreeable circumstances of the country, which he seems to think render some proposition necessary, and which he also supposes call for the adoption of his particular proposition. The honourable gentleman seems to think that he has only to submit a proposition to the Committee.—It was as if he said, "Your late Corn Bill is lost. The place is vacant, and since it must be supplied, allow me to present to your notice a law which has been passed these five years, and has not been used." This bill he is forced at the same time to acknowledge, possesses so many defects in principles that it has never been brought into operation. It contains, among other clauses, that clause which I will call the deterring clause, namely, that which prevented the introduction into our markets of foreign wheat until our own wheat had attained the price of eighty shillings, a clause which was no better than a bugbear, and which utterly prevented that bill from being efficient and operative.

I admit, Sir, that there are circumstances in the country, such as require some interposition of the Legislature; but I do think that the honour-

able gentleman is asking too much of this branch of the Legislature, when he desires the Committee to consider of some proceeding to meet those circumstances; and, in entering upon that consideration, to retract their latest and most mature deliberation, and to adopt a bill which has always been acknowledged to be defective, rather than resort to the principle at least of that measure, which, as it seems to me, has been unmeritedly thrown aside. Who, I ask, Sir, who, in the course of the last discussion upon the state of the Corn Laws, ever once proposed to act even upon the principle of the Bill of 1822? None. None, at least, without a considerable alteration in the provisions of that Act, which, from its known deficiencies, has been a dead letter from the very date of its enactment. In making his proposition, the honourable gentleman has assumed it to be necessary upon other considerations besides those to which I have alluded. But even there his reasoning seems to me equally inconclusive. He says, that the House of Commons have lately passed a bill, in which sixty shillings or sixty-two shillings were stated as the remunerating price; that that bill, without any fault of ours, and be it observed too, without any impeachment of the principle of the bill itself, has been rejected elsewhere; in consequence of which, a difficulty has arisen, and an alarm has been created throughout the country—*ergo*, as the difficulty exists, it must

be removed, and as alarm has been created, it must be pacified; and the difficulty and the alarm both being caused by the high price of corn, the honourable gentleman proposes to remove the one, and to pacify the other, by destroying the remunerating price of sixty-two shillings; and, by returning to the price of seventy shillings, which it was our object lately to diminish.

It is really impossible to establish any other proposition than that which I have just stated, as the consequence of his arguments. The honourable gentleman ought not also to have lost sight of the circumstance, that in the recent discussions of this House upon the subject of the corn laws, it was not only the price, but the principle which came under consideration; and the question, therefore, which we have to consider, is not only whether we can agree to the substitution of 70*s*. for 60*s*. but also whether the more matured decision of this House shall be abandoned, and whether we shall withdraw our support from those principles on which that decision was founded, for no other reason than that those principles have not been fortunate enough to meet with approbation elsewhere? Yet such is the conduct which the honourable gentleman wishes us to pursue; and without any arguments to show the incorrectness of the conclusions to which we then arrived, he calls upon us to abandon what we have done, and to retract the deliberate de-

cision we have lately made—to disclaim all we have been before declaring necessary—and, in short, to go back to the principles of prohibition. I do not say that the honourable gentleman has been unable to make his propositions clear to the House from the want of capacity in himself. I do not say that it is from the want of ability, or of knowledge, or of experience (all of which he possesses as much as any other member of this House), that he has not succeeded in furnishing the House with a single reason for the course he requires us to pursue. Perhaps that he has not done so is more to be attributed to the nature of his proposition itself than to any other circumstance. I agree, Sir, with the honourable gentleman, that something is necessary to be done; but the rule I should lay down upon the subject is a very plain one. As, I presume, that the House of Commons is not reduced so low in proper spirit and in proper pride, as to abjure what has recently and solemnly declared to be necessary principles, to rescind their deliberate resolutions, and to throw away as waste paper that bill which they have so much and so carefully considered, merely because in a certain assembly, which, for many reasons, is entitled to our respect, it did not happen to be entertained with that courtesy which might have been expected, but was made the subject of an amendment, which not merely went to rescind what we had enacted, but to

introduce principles, that, besides being new, were positively contrary to what we had determined to be necessary.*

Let the House itself feel this as it may. If there be shame in it—it will not submit to this. While, however, on the one hand, I should say that we ought not to submit to change our opinions, and to abandon our own principles without being satisfied that we were mistaken, yet I do most sincerely wish, on the other hand, that the bill I now propose to pass should be as little liable as possible to any objections that may throw impediments in the way of its being passed. I should, therefore, lay down as a rule to guide us in framing a new bill, that it

* The following is the amendment originally proposed by the Duke of Wellington :—" Provided always, that no corn shall be entered for home consumption from any warehouse in any port or place in this kingdom, previous to the entry for home consumption, or to the exportation of every other portion or portions of corn previously lodged in warehouse, in such port or place, without the consent in writing, under the hand and seal of the proprietor of such last-mentioned corn, so long as the average price of corn within this kingdom, as settled by virtue of this Act, shall be less than 70*s*. a quarter."

This Amendment was subsequently withdrawn, and another substituted for it by His Grace, in a committee of the House of Lords, which was carried by a majority of 11. The following is the form in which it was carried, and the carrying of which induced Ministers to give up the bill :—" That no wheat shall be taken out of bond while the average price of wheat shall be less than 66*s*. per quarter."

should not, if possible, run counter to any thing which we have reason to believe will occasion its loss in another place. While, therefore, on the one hand, I do not wish that we should yield one tittle of our privileges, so, on the other, I am not desirous that this period of the session should pass without enacting a measure that may produce some practical good. That such a measure should be perfect, is more than can possibly be expected; but something is necessary to be done at once, and time enough will then remain fully to consider the alterations that may afterwards be deemed necessary.

The first rule, therefore, which I would adopt, should be to do nothing that may ensure contradiction elsewhere; and, secondly, that we should do no more than is absolutely necessary at the present moment, since after that which has passed here and in the other House of Parliament, every person must be satisfied, that in the next session the whole subject must be fully reconsidered. The third rule I would establish is, that conceding every thing that may fairly be required from us, we should begin with spirit whatever we intend to do, and we should frame our bill on those principles which have been concurred in here, and on which we have legislated. Now, as far as we have the means of knowing, the principle of the bill we have already passed has not been touched. Indeed that bill, when it was discussed

in the other House upon principle, passed its second reading by a large majority. The immediate evil against which we have to provide is, the alarm that the loss of the bill has occasioned—an alarm which, if the statements of some honourable gentlemen are not exaggerated, must be very considerable. If the alarm is not great now, I trust most sincerely that the minds of men will not become more excited, and at least that the amount of evil may not be exaggerated. I know that if alarm does at present exist, we have great reason to fear that it may be made the subject of exaggeration; for the period at which such an alarm is likely to be the greatest, is between the present time and that of the coming in of the harvest; in other words, between the expenditure of the stock in hand, and the period of obtaining the new supply. At this moment I am happy to say, that from all the accounts we have received, there is every reason to believe that no ground for alarm exists, for the harvest promises to be most abundant; but, notwithstanding this, I understand there is an apprehension that the failure of the bill which lately passed this House may create an alarm which may be much exaggerated, if the report should be spread abroad that nothing is intended to be done by Parliament.

Now it does so happen, that by the natural operation of the Bill (for the minds of men were, in some degree, prepared to expect that it would

pass into a law), a great quantity of foreign corn has been introduced into the country, and there are, at this moment about 560,000 quarters of foreign corn in the ports of England. As these have been brought hither on the expectation that their importation would be sanctioned by law, something must be done with them; and as the principle of the bill that passed this House has not been impeached in the other House of Parliament, I feel no hesitation in making a proposition on the subject. I propose, then, that these 560,000 quarters of foreign corn, now in bond in this country, should be let out, not by an act of the Government (for greatly as the honourable gentlemen fears the exercise of such a power on the part of the Government, I assure him that he is not more unwilling to confer such a power than we are to exercise it), but that they should come out under the provisions of the bill now before the House. To that part of the bill there was no objection in the other House of Parliament, and therefore it is that I now propose, that the quantity of corn now in warehouse in this country, or which may be brought into warehouse here before the 1st day of July, shall be allowed to come out, under the restrictions and regulations, both with respect to price and duty, as would have been in existence, had the bill which passed this House assumed the authority of a law. To that purpose, at least, the bill may

be supposed to have passed into a law, since that part of its provisions was not objected to in the other House. The point which impeded the passing of the bill was quite of another description. At the same time, I believe, that with respect to the regulations on which foreign corn was to have been imported hereafter, an amendment was proposed and negatived. I state this with the view of showing, that in what I propose we should do with reference to bonded corn, we shall not be running the risk of engaging in a conflict with the other House—a conflict which I should extremely deprecate.

The only point to which I now wish to allude, is with reference to another species of foreign corn, very small in its amount, but with respect to the importation of which there are peculiar circumstances of favour—I mean the corn of Canada, for the shipping of which preparations have already been made, and for which bills have been transmitted here on the faith that such corn might legally be imported. This is the only proposition which, under present circumstances, the Government think proper to submit to the House. My first proposition is, to let loose the corn now in bond by the operation of the principles of the bill itself; and then to let in, under the same restrictions, the corn of Canada, which has been shipped on the faith of the bill. To neither of those parts of the bill was the smallest objection

made in the House of Lords, and the amendment which lost the bill, was, as far as I understand the matter, one which did not touch them in the least.

In proposing them, Sir, for the consideration of this Committee, I am therefore doing that which will not bring us within the risk of a conflict with the other House, since the principles on which I now wish to act are those that met with no objection, and were in fact adopted from us. This act of Legislation is, however, but temporary in its nature, as I propose it shall last no longer than the 1st of May in the following year. I shall do this for the purpose of insuring the early attention of Parliament to a subject which I cannot but consider of vital importance to the country. It is my earnest wish that the first act of the Legislature, in the ensuing year, shall be to reconsider the act of the present session; and by the experience we shall then have had, I think we shall possess the fullest and best means of entering on that reconsideration.

Between the honourable gentleman and myself there is a wide practical difference. I propose, that, in case of emergency, a quantity of foreign corn, to a limited extent, shall be admitted into the market here. I say, to a limited extent, because I have no desire to alarm the agriculturalists; and I, therefore, limit the extent of corn thus to be rendered admissible, to that which is

now in warehouse in this country, or which may have been shipped on the faith of the bill that has passed this House. The price at which I propose it shall be admissible, is sixty shillings; and I adopt the scale of price and the scale of duty from that bill, the principle of which was not opposed in the House of Lords; but I restrict the operation of that principle, by confining it entirely to that corn which is now in bond here, or which has been shipped from Canada, and for which bills have been drawn and accepted. The honourable gentleman, on the contrary, proposes to get rid of the principle of the bill passed in this House in the present Session, and to treat it as if every part of it had been rejected in the other House, resorting to seventy shillings as the *minimum* price at which the people of England are to be relieved from the pressure of the high price of corn, by the importation of foreign grain. The practical difference, therefore, between the honourable gentleman and myself is considerable; and I confess that I do not think the House can hesitate in agreeing with me, that the proposition I have submitted is that which ought to be adopted. I do not think the honourable gentleman will find the circumstances of the times are such, that his measure, even if it should now be carried, will be conceived to be one which ought to be fastened permanently on the country. All I ask is, that

Parliament should meet a present, or, at least, a probably approaching evil, reserving to itself the full right of discussion upon the framing of a permanent measure, which, for the honour of this Parliament, and for the advantage of the people of this country, I trust may pass into a law, and be finally settled in the next Session. I have now, Sir, only to move, "That it is the opinion of this Committee, that every sort of foreign corn, grain, meal, or flour, now warehoused in the United Kingdom, or which may be reported for warehousing before the 1st of July next, shall be admitted into the home market for consumption before and until the 1st of May, 1828, on payment of the duties following." The duties I propose are those which would have been payable had our bill passed into a law.

At the close of a long debate, in which Mr. Peel, Sir J. Newport, and Mr. Huskisson, took a part,

Mr. Canning rose to reply:—I shall trespass on the indulgence of the House for a very few minutes, in reply to the only objection I have heard advanced to the Resolution which I have had the honour of proposing. My answer to the only objection I can recollect will be brief—but I beg to begin by replying to a question that has been put to me by an honourable gentleman oppo-

site. He asks me whether I do not think it right to protect the agricultural interest? I do consider that the agricultural interest ought to be protected, aye, and protected too as the primary interest of the country. Such is the bounden duty of this House. But I also consider, that the course of legislation, pursued for some years past, has not been to promote the permanent interest of the agriculturalists. The mistaken views that had obtained, and the erroneous notions that were acted upon, in the period that I allude to, are in no instance more flagrant—not that I mean to cast blame on those who committed these mistakes, and it was by accident that I did not participate in the acts which led to them—but the erroneous notions that they had acted upon, appear, in no instance, more flagrant than in the operation of the Acts of 1815 and 1822. Can any man look to the consequences of these bills, and say, they have not been most grievous to the agricultural interest? I must also say, that I consider the bill now before the House of Lords, calculated, had they been pleased to adopt it, to afford more secure protection to that interest, than any other measure whatever that has hitherto been proposed, professing to have that object in view. I consider that it was calculated to produce that which, of all effects, I should consider most desirable, not highness nor lowness, but steadi-

ness of price. I consider that it was calculated to guard against those ruinous fluctuations which, ever since the bill of 1815, have pressed with alternate but equal violence on, as they are called, the two conflicting interests, which, I say, are not conflicting, but consentient interests—fluctuations which, in times of plenty, caused alarm; and, in times of scarcity, aggravated the miseries of famine. The adoption of the bill in the House of Lords would have gone a greater way to curb those evils and prevent their recurrence, than any measure, which, in my memory, or in that of all those with whom I have conversed on the subject, has yet been presented to the consideration of Parliament. It was upon that ground, and not from any undue partiality for a particular plan, that I originally gave my concurrence to the bill that passed this House. And I beg to inform the House, that, unless I find reason to alter my present opinion, it is something very like that bill which will receive my support.

The principle of the measure that will receive my support, is one which, rendering the Corn Trade, instead of a series of successive speculations and experiments, instead of being mutually ruinous to the home trader, as well as to the foreign trader or importer, will make it mutually a matter of convenience—will make it, in short, a trade which would assist, and be

beneficial to both, and, at the same time, be conformable to the interests of the country at large. Such are the grounds on which I shall approve a bill, and such ought to be the grounds, and those only, on which Parliament should grant its sanction to any measure whatever connected with the trade in corn. An honourable gentleman has asked another question, which I shall answer. He asks, what is the difference between prohibition and a prohibitory duty? and says he cannot see any. But it is different in the Corn Trade, as it would be in any other trade, and no man could propose to prohibit any other trade without being convicted of absurdity. The difference between prohibition and a prohibitory duty is this—where the trade is not actually prohibited, but is allowed, under certain restrictions, it never will become totally stagnant; there will always be more or less of speculation in it, which will keep it alive; but if the trade be altogether prohibited, the consequence would be, that, in time of scarcity, there would be no supply, and, afterwards, we should be overflowed, when moderate supply would be mischievous. A duty would not prevent capital being employed in a trade; nor would it apply such irresistible stimuli as would be afforded by a scarcity after a prohibition. That is the difference between the effects of prohibition and prohibitory duty. When once a steadiness of price is introduced, that temptation

to extravagant speculation, raised by what took place in 1816 and 1819, when both grower and consumer were ruined, will be taken away. These are my answers to the questions that have been put to me.

I now proceed to reply to the only objection I have heard to the resolution I proposed to substitute instead of those of the honourable mover. It is asked, why I do not introduce a permanent bill? That, Sir, was a point which I avoided, as I did not wish to subject myself to the necessity of applying myself to it. But the question has been asked, and I shall reply to it. I know no reason why I should hold one language within the walls of this House, and another out of them; but if I were out of them, I should answer fairly, that it was because there existed in the other House of Parliament, a deep-rooted spirit to reject whatever bill of that sort the House of Commons might think fit to send up. Is there any man, either out of or in this House, who will lay his hand on his heart and say, that he believes no such spirit to exist? I have conversed with men of all parties in this House, and they have all agreed with me in opinion that such a spirit does exist. Some did it in lamentation, others in indignation and anger, and some again in triumph. Out of this House the same opinion prevails, and there was not a single man with whom I conversed, who did not seem convinced that the

one hundred and thirty-three voters for a certain amendment were guided by some other bond of sympathy besides a disinterested conviction of the advantage to be derived from the course which they pursued. I have conversed with those who walk the streets—with "all sorts of persons"—and yet I have not found one who was satisfied that the coincidence of these voters was perfectly a matter of chance, or that it arose from a conviction that the rejection of the bill would be attended with beneficial consequences.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood. With respect to the Duke of Wellington I am convinced —and his correspondence with my right honourable friend (Mr. Huskisson) affords evidence of it—that his grace, however he may have acted under misapprehension, acted from a conviction that the course which he pursued was one likely to be beneficial to his country.

But, looking to all the circumstances, I cannot help thinking, that even so great a man as the Duke of Wellington has been made something like an instrument in the hands of others. There are several instances of such things happening, in other times, to as great men as the Duke of Wellington. Many circumstances lead me to this conclusion. Amendments which preceded that of the noble duke had paved the way for him—I believe, unconsciously to himself. Certain words

were omitted in the first clause of the bill, without which the amendment of the noble duke could not have been mooted. When, I say, I see these and other circumstances, I cannot help thinking there was some master hand which directed the movements of the various machinery by which the object was attained. That that surmise is correct, I have no doubt, for else it would not have been possible to have got together such discordant materials, (differing as they do on every other subject), to agree upon a point which every impartial person must concede to be any thing but advantageous to the professed object of the bill.

I do not, therefore, Sir, propose to bring forward any permanent measure this session. But I have no doubt, that whatever temporary delusion may exist upon this question, it will pass away in the course of another session of Parliament, and that in particular the clause which has been under discussion to-night, will not stand in our way, as it will be discused out of doors, and its true nature be well understood by the country. Other amendments also the House will then be prepared to acquiesce in, and, altogether, I have no doubt that that which is now difficult, will shortly be easy. Before I sit down, I beg again to say, that any allusions I may have made to the Duke of Wellington, have been made in no spirit of hostility to him, as I am satisfied that, however much

we may differ as to the value of his clause—and that he over-values it, I think will be shortly seen—he yet thought he was acting rightly.

In conclusion, I beg to add, that unless I am better advised than at present, the measure that is to be brought forward next session shall be the same in principle, and tend to the same object, and I trust in God it may be under the same advantages, as the bill of this session.

The House then divided, when there appeared—

For the original motion . . .	52
For Mr. Canning's amendment .	238
Majority for Ministers	186

DISSENTERS' MARRIAGE BILL.

JUNE 20th, 1827.

On the motion for the third reading of the Dissenters' Marriage Bill—

Sir Charles Wetherell opposed the bill, as a measure which made marriage a mere civil contract, and placed the people of these countries, and of these times, under the revolutionary law of Cromwell and of Petion. He thought too, that any attempt to make marriage a ceremony which

might be arranged in a police office, would increase the number of clandestine marriages.

Mr. Canning* said, that the different objections which had been made by the different objectors were of such a nature, that they proved to him that the objectors were all agreed as to the principle of the measure. The arguments of the honourable and learned gentleman (Sir Charles Wetherall) were the most unfair he had ever heard used, and were pushed more *ad invidiam* than he had ever known arguments pushed. They had been pushed so far, that he (Mr. Canning) began to feel alarmed, when he recollected that he had been married, not indeed in a tavern, but in a room, and most of the gentlemen who heard him had probably been married in this way; and the same way was precisely the circumstance which, according to the honourable gentleman's arguments, vitiated marriage. But the honourable gentleman said they were married by licence. But a marriage by licence was a purchased marriage, and he was astonished to hear the honourable gentleman, who was the great enemy of Rome, arguing that the rich, who were able to purchase the right to marry, were at liberty to do so, while those who, not being rich, contracted marriage in any other place than a church, were unworthy of the protection of the Legislature. Such arguments were only calculated to confirm honourable members in the support they were already disposed to give the bill. If he (Mr. Canning) were then to vote against the bill, and if that vote were fatal to the measure, this much litigated subject would be again hung up till another session, and the parties would then again have to run the gauntlet of all such objections as had been then stated, and which might again end in being fatal to the measure. If the bill passed and went to the other House, he was satisfied that the principle of the

bill would meet the sanction of authorities, both legal and ecclesiastical, of the highest consideration. He knew that in sending it to that House, it would not be met by an indiscriminate opposition; but if there were on one side great learning, and talents, and piety opposed to it, there were on the other side great talents, piety, and learning to bring forward its merits. He felt, in giving his vote for the measure, he was voting under the protection of not the least respectable and preponderating part of the church of England; and in giving his vote, he voted under no apprehension of the result.

The bill was then read a third time and passed.

CORN AMENDMENT BILL.

JUNE 21st, 1827.

Sir E. Knatchbull said, that he believed the principle of this bill had the sanction of Lord Liverpool; but although it was urged on his authority, he doubted whether its details ever received the approbation of that noble lord.

Mr. Canning* assured the honourable baronet, that not only the principle of the bill, but all the details, had been attentively considered, and completely approved by Lord Liverpool, with the single exception of one clause, respecting our commercial intercourse with other countries. He meant that which was called the Reciprocity Clause. His noble friend was thoroughly acquainted with every part of the measure. The

speech with which he (Mr. Canning) had opened the question on introducing the late bill, was spoken, in fact, from a memorandum written by Lord Liverpool, as from a brief, and only amplified for the purpose of fuller explanation. The honourable baronet seemed to entertain some doubt with respect to the price having been fixed by Lord Liverpool. He could assure the honourable baronet, that the fixing of the price of 60*s*. was his noble friend's original, own, individual proposition. He drew a different inference from the conversation which the honourable baronet had with his noble friend on the subject; and he knew, too, that his noble friend had drawn a different inference from it. Lord Liverpool certainly understood, from what had passed between him and the honourable baronet, that the bill would meet with a very limited opposition, at least in that House. His noble friend had told him (Mr. C.) the substance of the conversation, soon after it had taken place. His noble friend had stated to him, that having met the honourable baronet in Kent, he had mentioned the price of 60*s*. and that the honourable baronet had answered as he had that evening related, that with that price he would be contented, looking upwards rather than downwards. It was not necessary for him (Mr. Canning) to say that this expression had been misunderstood; for as to its perfect accuracy he could have no doubt, because the honourable baronet had repeated it in precisely the same words as Lord Liverpool. His noble friend had reported it to him, as the foundation of a hope that he should get the bill through the House of Commons with less difficulty than he had expected. If there were any other points on which the honourable baronet had any doubt as to the entire concurrence of Lord Liverpool in this measure, he was ready to give him the most satisfactory explanation.

With respect to what the honourable baronet had said regarding the duty he owed the agricultural interest, he would meet the honourable baronet's professions with corresponding professions. He assured him that he felt as deeply as the honourable baronet could, the difficulties on both sides of the question; and that consideration was due to the possible sufferings of the agricultural population, as well as to the practical sufferings of the manufacturing classes. He could not refrain from doing the manufacturing classes the justice of saying, that under all the privations which they had lately endured, they had manifested an exemplary spirit. During no previous period of real or apprehended suffering, had that House been so little vexed with importunate applications. He trusted this conduct would be borne in mind by Parliament, and met by a corresponding feeling on their part; and that, whatever might be the issue of their labours, which he hoped would not be fruitless, at least they would recommence the consideration of the question next session with minds unbiassed. He trusted that the discussions would be conducted with temperance, and that on a subject of so deep and vital importance, no angry passions would be excited. There was one point more to which he would advert before he concluded. The honourable baronet seemed to anticipate, that if the price of corn should fall below the assumed point of protection, under the operation of this measure, the House would be bound to reconsider its steps. The honourable baronet should recollect, that when the late bill was brought in, the price of corn was considerably below 60*s*. If next year it should be where it was when that bill was introduced, or even though it should be higher, it would be still below the point above which the honourable baronet wished to see it raised. The price of wheat that existed on the very day that he

(Mr. Canning) opened the bill, was between 53*s.* and 54*s.* It would be proper, therefore, to measure, not from 60*s.* but from what the price was when the bill originated.

The House then resolved itself into a committee on the bill, which passed through its several stages, and was subsequently taken up to the House of Lords, where it was agreed to, after which it received the Royal assent and passed into a law.

SINECURES IN SCOTLAND.

JUNE 29th, 1828.

Mr. Canning* spoke for the last time in Parliament this evening, in reply to a question from Mr. Wood, the member for Preston, who requested to know what was intended to be done by Government respecting a sinecure place of considerable value, (Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland), which had been recently become vacant by the death of the Duke of Gordon. It was the intention of Government, he (Mr. C.) begged to inform the honourable member, respecting the regulation of the office alluded to by him, to follow the recommendation of a committee appointed in 1817, to report upon the course expedient to pursue upon the occurrence of vacancies in certain places.

ADDENDA.

INTRODUCTION.

In the original plan of this work, it was not intended to include more than the Parliamentary Speeches of Mr. Canning. The desire, however, of rendering the present publication a complete as well as faithful record of the eloquence and statesmanlike views of Mr. Canning, has induced the Editor to introduce into these volumes his principal speeches at Liverpool, and on various other public occasions. At the four elections at Liverpool—1812, 1816, 1818, 1820—Mr. Canning spoke at the close of each day of the contests, as well as at several entertainments given to him by his constituents. His speech at the public dinner in honour of his re-election, in the Music Hall, 1820, is considered to contain the best argument that has ever been pronounced against Parliamentary Reform; and it is esteemed by many very competent critics, to surpass, both in power of eloquence and of argument, any speech which he ever delivered, either in or out of Parliament. The following Speeches abound in new beauties, for the display of which, the occasions on which they were spoken afforded more suitable scope and opportunity than the forms and practice of Parliamentary debate usually admit. These speeches are perfect models of popular eloquence.—Editor.

SPEECH

AT LIVERPOOL, AFTER HAVING BEEN CHAIRED, ON SATURDAY, THE 17TH OF OCTOBER, 1812.

GENTLEMEN,

I congratulate you on your final success; for it is your victory, and not mine. The contest has been a contest of principles, not of persons; although I should belie my own feelings if I were not to confess, that, to the latest hour of my life, I shall be proud that the battle has been fought in my person, and that my name has been associated with your exertions, and illustrated by your triumph. You, gentlemen, have done me the honour to select me, not, undoubtedly, for any individual merits of my own, (I know that I can pretend to none,) but in order that, by returning me to represent your opinions in Parliament, you might vindicate the freedom of your choice, the loyalty of your principles, and the consistency of your character.

Gentlemen, I wish that those theorists of reform, who think nothing right in the practice of our Constitution, could witness the scene which I have now the delight to survey: those who presume that every popular feeling must belong to themselves alone; who imagine that a zealous and ardent exercise of popular rights, and an enthusiastic expression of popular sentiments, are incompatible with an equally enthusiastic attachment to all the monarchical principles of the Constitution. When will such men learn, that what they call exclusively popular principles are not the principles of the people? Can they look this day at the

peaceful triumph of Liverpool, as they have looked for the last three years at the glorious and bloody struggles of Spain, and yet doubt the possibility of a combination of all that is national in feeling, with all that is loyal in principle; of a spirit of democracy sufficient to give energy to a state, with a devotedness to monarchy sufficient to secure its conservation?

Gentlemen, some persons have endeavoured to persuade you, that in giving your suffrages to a man who has been the uniform supporter of a war, glorious in itself, but only glorious inasmuch as it is necessary and unavoidable, you are deferring the day of peace. Fortunately, for the clear understanding of such reasonings, they have sometimes been coupled with prophecy. Let us compare, where we have an opportunity, what has happened with what was foretold; and then judge what weight is to be assigned to the same reasonings in future.

The honourable gentleman (Mr. Brougham) who left your hustings yesterday, (of whom, as an individual, I have spoken, and mean to speak with the utmost respect,) on or about the 16th of last June, proposed, in the House of Commons, a specific concession to America; and pledged himself, that if that concession were made, peace would be preserved or restored. By a singular coincidence, on or about the same day on which that motion was made, the declaration of war by America against Great Britain passed the Senate of the United States. O! but the concession was to heal all. The Ministers, whether swayed by the honourable gentleman's eloquence, or participating in his expectations, I know not, gave way; and the concession was made. Confident, from this triumph, as might naturally be expected, the honourable gentleman, the prophet of American reconciliation, presents himself (I ought rather to say, is presented, by some among you) to be chosen as your

representative in Parliament. Yesterday he left your town, disappointed of this honourable object: and, by another singular coincidence, the defeat of the prophecy upon which his expectations were founded, is made known here on the very day of the defeat of those expectations. For, yesterday, the declaration, the tardy declaration of war by this country against America, arrives here; and tells us, in terms too plain to be misunderstood, that to seek peace through humiliation, is a course neither of honour nor of advantage.

It has been further attempted to deter you from the choice, which you have done me the honour to make, by saying that I had been in office, and am likely to be in office again. I have been in office. How soon, if ever I may be in office again, I neither know, nor do I very much care, for any other reason than as it might afford me greater opportunities of promoting the interests of the country, of which your interests constitute so essential a part.

But, gentlemen, what is meant by this imputation? Are they who urge it so little read in the principles, the democratical principles, of the British Constitution, as not to know that it is one of the peculiar boasts of this country, one of the prime fruits of its free Constitution, and one main security for its continuing free, that men as humble as myself, with no pretensions of wealth, or title, or high family, or wide-spreading connections, may yet find their way into the cabinet of their Sovereign, through the fair road of public service, and stand there upon a footing of equality with the proudest aristocracy of the land?

Is it from courtiers of the people, from admirers of republican virtue and republican energy, that we hear doctrines which would tend to exclude from the management of public affairs all who are not illustrious by birth, or powerful from hereditary opulence? Why, gentlemen, in

this limited monarchy, there are undoubtedly contests for office, contests which agitate the elements of the Constitution, and which keep them alive and active, without endangering the Constitution itself. A republic is nothing but one continual struggle for office in every department of the state.

Mad, indeed, and desperate would be the reform which should exclude from the House of Commons, as some ignorant theorists advise, every man who has possessed, or who possesses office: separating thereby the service of the Crown from that of the people; as if they were not identified in interest, and mutually dependant on each other.

Gentlemen, if I have held office, I hope I have held it honourably: I will never hold it again but on the same terms. It is not my fault that I must state facts, in my own defence, which might appear to be stated ostentatiously; but I mean them simply as defensive. It is entirely my own fault, gentlemen, that I am not now addressing you with the seals of Secretary of State in my pocket. Twice, in the course of the last six months, have the seals of the office of Secretary of State been tendered to my acceptance; and twice have I declined them. Is this like hankering after office? I declined them, not because I was unwilling to render any services of which my poor abilities were capable to my country; not because I did not acknowledge, with all due gratitude and humility, the gracious disposition of my Prince; not because I shrink from the difficulties of the times, to the encountering and overcoming of which I should feel myself, from the public situation in which I have had the honour to stand, bound to render whatever aid was in my power, if I could do so with effect, by doing so with credit. I declined office, gentlemen, because it was tendered to me on terms not consistent, as I thought, and as my immediate friends agreed in thinking, with my personal

honour; because, if accepted on such terms, it would not have enabled me to serve the public with efficiency.

Gentlemen, I presume not to trouble you with any details upon this subject; but what I have stated, and what is before the world, is, I hope, sufficient to justify me against the accusation of hankering after office. Whether you will ever see me in office again, I cannot tell; but of this I can assure you, that it shall not be in a way dishonourable to myself or to you. I dare not, indeed, reckon upon the continuance of such unmerited partiality and affection as you now so kindly heap upon me; but this I can answer for, that neither in nor out of office, shall you have cause to be ashamed of me.

Gentlemen, I stated to you, two nights ago, my opinion of the conduct of my adversary, Mr. Brougham, in determining, at that time, not to decline the contest. I told you, that I thought he could not do otherwise than act upon the opinions and persuasions of his friends; and that he had explained his motives with the utmost candour and fairness. I think so still. I myself know nothing to the contrary. But I have certainly heard, that speeches delivered in another place were very different, indeed, from those which were delivered at the hustings. And, while I beg not to be understood as intending to give any colour of my own to expressions which I did not hear, and cannot vouch for, there is one topic, which is represented as having made considerable impression, which I owe it to the Government of the country (however myself unconnected with it) not to suffer to pass unnoticed. The declaration of war against America has, as I am informed, been stated to have been delayed by the Government of this country for the sake of sweeping into the royal chest a large sum of the Droits of Admiralty, to be disposed of at the pleasure of Ministers, for purposes of prodigality and corruption. Gentlemen,

I would fain believe that this assertion cannot have been made. An account of the distribution of the Droits of Admiralty has, as is well known, been submitted to the House of Commons the last two years; and, surely, to attribute a measure of peace or war to a desire on the part of Government to disappointment our own captors, for the sake of getting possession of a sum, of which the disposal is, after all, to be made public, is to attribute motives not only altogether unworthy, but utterly inadequate and absurd.

I say this the rather, because I must fairly own, that, differing as I do entirely as to the causes to which the delay is to be attributed, I am inclined to agree that the declaration of war against America has been delayed too long. When all hopes of preserving peace were vanished, nothing remained, in my opinion, for this Government but prompt and vigorous war. It was the only course becoming this great country. It would have afforded the best chance of bringing the American Government to their senses.

The opinions which I now express are in unison with those which I took the liberty of expressing in my place in Parliament, when that concession was agreed to by the Ministers, at Mr. Brougham's suggestion, upon the strength of which Mr. Brougham has been presented to your choice. I then ventured to state my doubts, whether that concession would propitiate America; whether it would not rather tend to confirm the hostile policy of that Government, and to enhance its pretensions. In fact, how is it that our concession has been met? By reciprocal concession, by abated pride, assuaged malice, and returning good-will? No such thing. They have risen in their terms, as unreasonable concession will always induce and encourage an unreasonable enemy to do.

Gentlemen, you see that I speak to you as freely of the conduct and policy of our Government as of the conduct of

those to whom I am politically opposed. To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart and with all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader. My political allegiance lies buried in his grave. But I have, though not his immediate counsels to follow, his memory to cherish and revere. So far as I knew his opinions, on subjects which were, in his time, as well as now, of great public interest, I have adhered and shall adhere to those opinions as the guides of my public conduct. Where I can only reason from analogy on new questions which may arise, I shall endeavour to apply to those questions, whatever they may be, the principles which I imbibed and inherit from him; principles which, I well know, have alone recommended me to your choice this day.

Of the cause of good government, in whatever hands the administration of Government may be placed, even if in the hands of those to whom I have been politically opposed, I shall always be a faithful and steady supporter. But I do not pledge myself to you, I will never pledge myself to any man, to be the blind and subservient supporter of the Administration in any hands whatever. My general disposition is to support the Government. What I find amiss, however, I shall blame with freedom; though I will not do so with any intention to excite discontent, nor at the hazard of mischief to the country.

Gentlemen, if I did not retain the independence of my own judgment in the House of Commons, I should be but an unworthy representative of the independent and enlightened community which sends me thither. It may happen, that your judgment may occasionally come in conflict with my own. Men of independent minds may honestly differ on subjects which admit of a variety of views. In all such cases, I promise you, not indeed wholly to submit my judgment to yours; you would despise me if I made so

extravagant a profession: but I promise you that any difference of opinion between us will always lead me to distrust my own views, carefully to examine, and, if erroneous, frankly to correct them. Gentlemen, our judgments may clash, but our interest never: no interests of mine shall ever come in competition with yours. I promise you further, that, hoping, as I earnestly do, that the connection, of which the foundation is this day auspiciously laid, may last to the end of my political life—yet if, unfortunately, occasions should occur, (I cannot foresee or imagine any such,) on which there should arise between us, on points of serious importance, a radical and irreconcilable difference of opinion, I will not abuse my trust, but will give you the earliest opportunity of recalling or reconsidering your delegation of it.

Gentlemen, with the most heartfelt acknowledgment; with feelings of gratitude which words are too weak to convey, and of pride, which I dare not trust myself with expressing; with a sense of the honour which you have conferred upon me, less gratifying only than my sense of the kindness with which you have overwhelmed me; with sentiments such as till this day I never knew, but which I shall recollect with delight until the latest hour of my life, I take my leave of you for the present; praying that Providence may so direct my conduct as never to give you cause, in your better judgment, to look back with regret upon the choice which you have made.

SPEECH

ON MONDAY, THE 10TH OF JANUARY, 1814, AT THE LIVERPOOL ARMS HOTEL, AFTER HIS HEALTH HAD BEEN DRUNK.

GENTLEMEN,

As your guest, I thank you, from my heart, for the honourable and affectionate reception which you have given me. As the representative of Liverpool, I am most happy in meeting my constituents again, after a year's experience of each other, and a year's separation; a year, the most eventful in the annals of the world, and comprising, within itself, such a series of stupendous changes as might have filled the history of an age.

Gentlemen, you have been so good as to couple with my name the expression of your acknowledgments for the attention which I have paid to the interests of your town. You, gentlemen, I have no doubt, recollect the terms upon which I entered into your service; and you are aware, therefore, that I claim no particular acknowledgment at your hands for attention to the interests of Liverpool, implicated as they are with the general interests of the country. I trust, at the same time, that I have not been wanting to all or to any of you, in matters of local or individual concern. But I should not do fairly by you, if I were not to take this opportunity of saying, that a service (which certainly, I will not pretend to describe as without some burden in itself) has been made light to me, beyond all example, by that institution which your munificence and provident care have established: I mean, the office in London, through

which your correspondence with your members is now carried on. I had no pretension, gentlemen, to this singular mark of your consideration: but neither will it, I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to confess, that I might not have been able to discharge the service which I owe you in a way which would have satisfied my own feelings as well as yours—that I might, in spite of all my endeavours, have been guilty of occasional omissions, if I had not been provided with some such medium of communication with my constituents. Of an absent and meritorious individual it is as pleasing as it is just to speak well: and I do no more than justice to the gentleman (Mr. John Backhouse) whom you have appointed to conduct the office in question, (with whom I had no previous acquaintance,) in bearing public testimony to his merit, and in assuring you, that it would be difficult to find any one who would surpass him in zeal, intelligence, and industry.

Having despatched what it was necessary for me to say on these points, I know, gentlemen, that it is your wish, and I feel it to be my duty, that I should now proceed to communicate to you my sentiments on the state of public affairs, with the same frankness which has hitherto distinguished all our intercourse with each other. That duty is one which it does not now require any effort of courage to perform. To exhort to sacrifices, to stimulate to exertion, to shame despondency, to divert from untimely concession, is a duty of a sterner sort, which you found me not backward to discharge, at a period when, from the shortness of our acquaintance, I was uncertain whether my freedom might not offend you. My task of to-day is one at which no man can take offence. It is to mingle my congratulations with your rejoicings on the events which have passed and are passing in the world.

If, in contemplating events so widely (I had almost said

so tremendously) important, it be pardonable to turn one's view, for a moment, to local and partial considerations, I may be permitted to observe, that, while to Great Britain, while to all Europe, while to the world and to posterity, the events which have recently taken place are matter of unbounded and universal joy, there is no collection of individuals who are better entitled than the company now assembled in this room (in great part, I presume, identically the same, and altogether representing the same interests and feelings as that of which I took leave, in this room, about fourteen months ago) to exult in the present state of things, and to derive from it, in addition to their share of the general joy, a distinct and special satisfaction.

We cannot forget, gentlemen, the sinister omens and awful predictions under which we met and parted in October, 1812. The penalty denounced upon you for your election of me was, embarrassment to the rich, and famine to the poor. I was warned, that, when I should return to renew my acquaintance with my constituents, I should find the grass growing in your streets. In spite of that denunciation, you did me the honour to elect me; in spite of that warning, I venture to meet you here again. It must be fairly confessed, that this is not the season of the year to estimate correctly the amount of superfluous and unprofitable vegetation with which your streets may be teeming; but, without presuming to limit the power of productive nature, it is at least satisfactory to know, that the fields have not been starved to clothe your quays with verdure; that it is not by economizing in the scantiness of the harvest that nature has reserved her vigour for the pastures of your Exchange.

But, gentlemen, I am sure you feel with me, that these are topics which I treat with levity only because they are

not, nor were, at the time when they were seriously urged, susceptible of a serious argument; they did not furnish grounds on which any man would rest his appeal to your favour, or on which your choice of any man could be justified. If I have condescended to revert to them at all, it is because I would leave none of those recollections untouched which the comparison of our last meeting with the present, I know, suggests to your minds as well as to my own; and because I would, so far as in me lies, endeavour to banish from all future use, by exposing their absurdity, topics which are calculated only to mislead and to inflame. That the seasons would have run their appointed course, that the sun would have shone with as genial a warmth, and the showers would have fallen with as fertilizing a moisture, if you had not chosen me for your representative, is an admission which I make without much apprehension of the consequence. Nor do I wish you to believe, that your choice of any other than me would have delayed the return of your prosperity, or prevented the revival of your commerce.

I make these admissions without fear, so far as concerns the choice between individuals. But I do not admit, that it was equally indifferent upon what principles that choice should be determined. I do not admit, that, if the principles which it was then recommended to you to countenance had unfortunately prevailed in Parliament, and, through the authority of Parliament, had been introduced into the counsels of the country, they would not have interfered with fatal operation, not indeed to arrest the bounty of Providence, to turn back the course of the seasons, and to blast the fertility of the earth, but to stop that current of political events which, "taken at the flood," has placed England at the head of the world.

Gentlemen, if I had met you here again on this day in a

state of public affairs as doubtful as that in which we took leave of each other; if confederated nations had been still arrayed against this country, and the balance of Europe still trembling in the scale, I should not have hesitated now, as I did not hesitate then, to declare my decided and unalterable opinion, that perseverance, under whatever difficulties, under whatever privations, afforded the only chance of prosperity to you, because the only chance of safety to your country; and the only chance of safety to the country, because the only chance of deliverance to Europe. Gentlemen, I should be ashamed to address you now in the tone of triumph, if I had not addressed you then in that of exhortation. I should be ashamed to appear before you shouting in the train of success, if I had not looked you in the face and encouraged you to patience under difficulties. It is because my acquaintance with you commenced in times of peril and embarrassment, and because I then neither flattered nor deceived you, that I now not only offer to you my congratulations, but put in my claim to yours, on the extinction of that peril, on the termination of that embarrassment, and on the glorious issue to which exertion and endurance have brought that great struggle in which our honour and our happiness were involved.

Gentlemen, during the course of a political life, nearly coeval with the commencement of the war, I have never given one vote, I have never uttered one sentiment, which had not for its object the consummation now happily within our view.

I am not ashamed, and it is not unpleasing or unprofitable, to look back upon the dangers which we have passed, and to compare them with the scene which now lies before us. We behold a country, inferior in population to most of her continental neighbours, but multiplying her faculties and resources by her own activity and enterprise, by the

vigour of her constitution, and by the good sense of her people; we behold her, after standing up against a formidable foe, throughout a contest, in the course of which every one of her allies, and, at times, all of them together, have fainted and failed—nay, have been driven to combine with the enemy against her—we behold her, at this moment, rallying the nations of Europe to one point, and leading them to decisive victory.

If such a picture were merely the bright vision of speculative philosophy, if it were presented to us in the page of the history of ancient times, it would stir and warm the heart. But, gentlemen, this country is our own; and what must be the feelings which arise, on such a review, in the bosom of every son of that country? What must be the feelings of a community such as I am now addressing; which constitutes no insignificant part of the strength of the nation so described; which has suffered largely in her privations, and may hope to participate proportionably in her reward? What (I may be permitted to add) must be the feelings of one who is chosen to represent that community, and who finds himself in that honourable station at the moment of triumph, only because he discountenanced despair in the moment of despondency?

From the contemplation of a spectacle so mighty and magnificent as this, I should disdain to turn aside to the controversies of party. Of principles, however, it is impossible not to say something; because our triumph would be incomplete, and its blessings might be transient, if we could be led astray by any sophistry; if we could consent, in a sort of compromise of common joy, to forget or to misstate the causes from which that triumph has sprung. All of one mind, I trust and believe we are, in exulting at the success of our country; all of one mind, I trust, we now are throughout this land, in determining to persevere, if need be, in strenuous exertion to pro-

secute, and I hope, to perfect the great work so happily in progress. But we know, that there are some of those who share most heartily in the public exultation, who yet ascribe effects, which happily cannot be disputed, to causes which may justly be denied. No tenderness for disappointed prophecies, gentlemen, ought to induce us thus to disconnect effect and cause. It would lead to errors which might be dangerous, if unwarily adopted and generally received.

We have heard, for instance, that the war has now been successful, because the principles on which the war was undertaken have been renounced; that we are, at length, blessed with victory, because we have thrown away the banner under which we entered into the contest; that the contest was commenced with one set of principles, but that the issue has been happily brought about by the adoption of another. Gentlemen, I know of no such change. If we have succeeded, it has not been by the renunciation, but by the prosecution of our principles: if we have succeeded, it has not been by adopting new maxims of policy, but by upholding, under all varieties of difficulty and discouragement, old, established, inviolable principles of conduct.

We are told, that this war has, of late, become *a war of the people*, and that, by the operation of that change alone, the power of imperial France has been baffled and overcome. Nations, it is said, have, at length, made common cause with their sovereigns, in a contest which, heretofore, had been a contest of sovereigns only. Gentlemen, the fact of the change might be admitted, without, therefore, admitting the argument. It does not follow, that the people were not at all times equally interested in the war, (as those who think as I do have always contended that they were,) because it may be and must be admitted, that the people, in many countries, were for a time deluded. They who argue against us, say, that jarring interests have been reconciled.

We say, that gross delusions have been removed. Both admit the fact, that sovereigns and their people *are* identified. But it is for them who contend that this has been effected by change of principles, to specify the change. What change of principles or of government has taken place among the nations of Europe? We are the best judges of ourselves—what change has taken place *here*? Is the Constitution other than it was, when we were told, (as we often were told in the bad times,) that it was a doubt whether it were worth defending? Is the Constitution other than it was, when we were warned that peace on any terms must be made, as the only hope of saving it from popular indignation and popular reform?

There is yet another question to be asked. By what power, in what part of the world, has that final blow been struck, which has smitten the tyrant to the ground? I suppose, by some enlightened republic; by some recently regenerated government of pure philanthropy and uncorrupted virtue: I suppose, by some nation which, in the excess of popular freedom, considers even a representative system as defective, unless each individual interferes directly in the national concerns; some nation of enlightened patriots, every man of whom is a politician in the coffee-house, as well as in the senate: I suppose it is from some such government as this that the conqueror of autocrats, the sworn detroyer of monarchical England, has met his doom. I look through the European world, gentlemen, in vain: I find there no such august community. But in another hemisphere I do find such a one, which, no doubt, must be the political David by whom the Goliah of Europe has been brought down. What is the name of that glorious republic, to which the gratitude of Europe is eternally due—which, from its innate hatred to tyranny, has so perseveringly exerted itself to liberate the world,

and, at last, has successfully closed the contest? Alas, gentlemen, such a republic I do indeed find; but I find it enlisted, and (God be thanked!) enlisted alone, under the banner of the despot. But where was the blow struck? Where? Alas for theory! In the wilds of despotic Russia. It was followed up on the plains of Leipsic—by Russian, Prussian, and Austrian arms.

But let me not be mistaken. Do I, therefore, mean to contend—do I, therefore, give to our antagonists in the argument the advantage of ascribing to us the base tenet, that an absolute monarchy is better than a free government? God forbid! What I mean is this, that, in appreciating the comparative excellence of political institutions, in estimating the force of national spirit, and the impulses of national feeling, it is idle—it is mere pedantry, to overlook the affections of nature. The order of nature could not subsist among mankind, if there were not an *instinctive* patriotism; I do not say unconnected with, but prior and paramount to, the desire of political amelioration. It may be very wrong that it should be so. I cannot help it. Our business is with fact. And, surely, it is not to be regretted, that tyrants and conquerors should have learned, from the lessons of experience, that the first consideration suggested to the inhabitant of any country, by a foreign invasion, is, not whether the political constitution of the state be faultlessly perfect or not; but, whether the altar at which he has worshipped—whether the home in which he has dwelt from his infancy—whether his wife and his children—whether the tombs of his forefathers—whether the palace of the sovereign, under whom he was born, and to whom he, therefore, owes (or, if it must be so stated, fancies that he, therefore, owes) allegiance, shall be abandoned to violence and profanation.

That, in the infancy of the French revolution, many

nations in Europe were, unfortunately, led to believe and to act upon a different persuasion, is undoubtedly true; that whole countries were overrun by reforming conquerors, and flattered themselves with being proselytes till they found themselves victims. Even in this country, as I have already said, there have been times when we have been called upon to consider, whether there were not something at home which must be mended, before we could hope to repel a foreign invader with success.

It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried, if I may so say, to a disadvantage; that it should have been tried in countries where no man in his senses will say, that the frame of political society is such as, according to the most moderate principles of regulated freedom, it ought to be;—where, I will venture to say, without hazarding the imputation of being myself a visionary reformer, political society is not such as, after the successes of this war, and from the happy contagion of the example of Great Britain, it is sure gradually to become. It is fortunate for the world, that this question should have been tried on its own merits; that, after twenty years of controversy, we should be authorised, by undoubted results, to revert to nature and to truth, and to disentangle the genuine feelings of the heart from the obstructions which a cold, presumptuous, generalizing philosophy had wound around them.

One of the most delightful poets of this country, in describing the various proportions of natural blessings and advantages dispensed by Providence to the various nations of Europe, turns from the luxuriant plains and cloudless skies of Italy to the rugged mountains of Switzerland, and inquires, whether there, also, in those barren and stormy regions, the "patriot passion" is found equally imprinted

on the heart? He decides the question truly in the affirmative; and he says, of the inhabitant of those bleak wilds,

> "Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms
> And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
> And, as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
> Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
> So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
> But bind him to his native mountains more."

What Goldsmith thus beautifully applied to the physical varieties of soil and climate, has been found no less true with respect to political institutions. A sober desire of improvement, a rational endeavour to redress error, and to correct imperfection in the political frame of human society, are not only natural, but laudable in man. But it is well that it should have been shown, by irrefragable proof, that these sentiments, even where most strongly and most justly felt, supersede not that devotion to native soil which is the foundation of national independence. And it is right that it should be understood and remembered, that the spirit of national independence alone, aroused where it had slumbered, enlightened where it had been deluded, and kindled into enthusiasm by the insults and outrages of an all-grasping invader, has been found sufficient, without internal changes and compromises of sovereigns or governments with their people—without relaxations of allegiance and abjurations of authority, to animate, as with one pervading soul, the different nations of the continent; to combine, as into one congenial mass, their various feelings, passions, prejudices; to direct these concentrated energies, with one impulse, against the common tyrant; and to shake (and, may we not hope? to overthrow) the *Babel* of his iniquitous power.

Gentlemen, there is another argument, more peculiarly relating to our own country, which has, at times, been interposed to discourage the prosecution of the war. That this country is sufficient to its own defence, sufficient to its own happiness, sufficient to its own independence; and that the complicated combinations of continental policy are always hazardous to our interests, as well as burdensome to our means, has been, at several periods of the war, a favourite doctrine, not only with those who, for other reasons, wished to embarrass the measures of the Government, but with men of the most enlightened minds, of the most benevolent views, and the most ardent zeal for the interests as well as the honour of their country. May we not flatter ourselves, that, upon this point also, experience has decided in favour of the course of policy which has been actually pursued?

Can any man now look back upon the trial which we have gone through, and maintain that, at any period during the last twenty years, the plan of insulated policy could have been adopted, without having, in the event, at this day, prostrated England at the foot of a conqueror? Great, indeed, has been the call upon our exertions; great, indeed, has been the drain upon our resources; long and wearisome has the struggle been; and late is the moment at which peace is brought within our reach. But, even though the difficulties of the contest may have been enhanced, and its duration protracted by it, yet is there any man who seriously doubts whether the having associated our destinies with the destinies of other nations be or be not that which, under the blessing of Providence, has eventually secured the safety of all?

It is at the moment when such a trial has come to its issue, that it is fair to ask of those who have suffered under the pressure of protracted exertion, (and of whom rather

than of those who are assembled around me—for by whom have such privations been felt more sensibly?)—it is now, I say, the time to ask whether, at any former period of the contest, such a peace could have been made as would at once have guarded the national interests, and corresponded with the national character? I address myself now to such persons only as think the character of a nation an essential part of its strength, and, consequently, of its safety. But if, among persons of that description, there be one who, with all his zeal for the glory of his country, has yet, at times, been willing to abandon the contest in mere weariness and despair, of such a man I would ask, whether he can indicate the period at which he now wishes that such an abandonment had been consented to by the Government and the Parliament of Great Britain?

Is it when the continent was at peace—when, looking upon the map of Europe, you saw one mighty and connected system, one great luminary, with his attendant satellites circulating around him; at that period could this country have made peace, and have remained at peace for a twelvemonth? What is the answer? Why, that the experiment was tried. The result was the renewal of the war.

Was it at a later period, when the continental system had been established? When two-thirds of the ports of Europe were shut against you? When but a single link was wanting to bind the continent in a circling chain of iron, which should exclude you from intercourse with other nations? At that moment peace was most earnestly recommended to you. At that moment, gentlemen, I first came among you. At that moment I ventured to recommend to you perseverance, patient perseverance; and to express a hope that, by the mere strain of an unnatural effort, the massive bonds imposed upon the nations of the continent

might, at no distant period, burst asunder. I was heard by you with indulgence—I know not whether with conviction. But is it now to be regretted, that we did not, at that moment, yield to the pressure of our wants, or of our fears? What has been the issue? The continental system was completed, with the sole exception of Russia, in the year 1812. In that year the pressure upon this country was undoubtedly painful. Had we yielded, the system would have been immortal. We persevered, and, before the conclusion of another year, the system was at an end: at an end, as all schemes of violence naturally terminate, not by a mild and gradual decay, such as waits upon a regular and well-spent life, but by sudden dissolution; at an end, like the breaking up of a winter's frost. But yesterday the whole continent, like a mighty plain covered with one mass of ice, presented to the view a drear expanse of barren uniformity: to-day, the breath of heaven unbinds the earth, the streams begin to flow again, and the intercourse of human kind revives.

Can we regret that we did not, like the fainting traveller, lie down to rest—but, indeed, to perish—under the severity of that inclement season? Did we not more wisely, to bear up, and to wait the change?

Gentlemen, I have said that I should be ashamed, and in truth I should be so, to address you in the language of exultation, if it were merely for the indulgence, however legitimate, of an exuberant and ungovernable joy. But they who have suffered great privations have a claim not merely to consolation, but to something more. They are justly to be compensated for what they have undergone, or lost, or hazarded, by the contemplation of what they have gained.

We have gained, then, a rank and authority in Europe, such as, for the life of the longest liver of those who now

hear me, must place this country upon an eminence which no probable reverses can shake. We have gained, or rather we have recovered, a splendour of military glory, which places us by the side of the greatest military nations in the world. At the beginning of this war, while there was not a British bosom that did not beat with rapture at the exploits of our navy, there were few who would not have been contented to compromise for that reputation alone; to claim the sea as exclusively our province, and to leave to France and the other continental powers the struggle for superiority by land. That fabled deity, whom I see pourtrayed upon the wall,* was considered as the exclusive patron of British prowess in battle; but, in seeming accordance with the beautiful fiction of ancient mythology, our Neptune, in the heat of contest, smote the earth with his trident, and up sprang the fiery war-horse, the emblem of military power.

Let Portugal, now led to the pursuit of her flying conquerors—let liberated Spain—let France, invaded in her turn by those whom she had overrun or menaced with invasion, attest the triumphs of the army of Great Britain, and the equality of her military with her naval fame. And let those who, even after the triumphs of the Peninsula had begun, while they admitted that we had indeed wounded the giant in the heel, still deemed the rest of his huge frame invulnerable—let them now behold him reeling under the blows of united nations, and acknowledge, at once, the might of British arms, and the force of British example.

I do not say that these are considerations with a view to which the war, if otherwise terminable, ought to have been purposely protracted; but I say that, upon the retrospect, we have good reason to rejoice, that the war was not closed

* A figure of Neptune.

ingloriously and insecurely, when the latter events of it have been such as have established our security by our glory.

I say we have reason to rejoice, that, during the period when the continent was prostrate before France—that, especially during the period when the continental system was in force, we did not shrink from the struggle; that we did not make peace for present and momentary ease, unmindful of the permanent safety and greatness of this country; that we did not leave unsolved the momentous questions, whether this country could maintain itself against France, unaided and alone; or with the continent divided; or with the continent combined against it: whether, when the wrath of the tyrant of the European world was kindled against us with sevenfold fury, we could or could not walk unharmed and unfettered through the flames?

I say we have reason to rejoice, that, throughout this more than *Punick* war, in which it has so often been the pride of our enemy to represent herself as the Rome, and England as the Carthage, of modern times, (with at least this colour for the comparison, that the utter destruction of the modern Cathage has uniformly been proclaimed to be indispensable to the greatness of her rival),—we have, I say, reason to rejoice, that, unlike our assigned prototype, we have not been diverted by internal dissensions from the vigorous support of a vital struggle; that we have not suffered distress nor clamour to distract our counsels, or to check the exertions of our arms.

Gentlemen, for twenty years that I have sat in Parliament, I have been an advocate of the war. You knew this when you did me the honour to choose me as your representative. I then told you that I was the advocate of the war, because I was a lover of peace; but of a peace that should be the fruit of honourable exertion, a peace

that should have a character of dignity, a peace that should be worth preserving, and should be likely to endure. I confess I was not sanguine enough, at that time, to hope that I should so soon have an opportunity of justifying my professions. But I know not why, six weeks hence, such a peace should not be made as England may not only be glad, but proud to ratify. Not such a peace, gentlemen, as that of Amiens—a short and feverish interval of unrefreshing repose. During that peace, which of you went or sent a son to Paris, who did not feel or learn that an Englishman appeared in France shorn of the dignity of his country; with the mien of a suppliant, and the conscious prostration of a man who had consented to purchase his gain or his ease by submission? But let a peace be made to-morrow, such as the allies have now the power to dictate, and the meanest of the subjects of this kingdom shall not walk the streets of Paris without being pointed out as the compatriot of Wellington; as one of that nation, whose firmness and perseverance have humbled France and rescued Europe.

Is there any man that has a heart in his bosom who does not find, in the contemplation of this contrast alone, a recompense for the struggles and the sufferings of years?

But, gentlemen, the doing right is not only the most honourable course of action—it is also the most profitable in its result. At any former period of the war, the independence of almost all the other countries, our allies, would have been to be purchased with sacrifices profusely poured out from the lap of British victory. Not a throne to be re-established, not a province to be evacuated, not a garrison to be withdrawn, but this country would have had to make compensation, out of her conquests, for the concessions obtained from the enemy. Now, happily, this work is already done, either by our efforts or to our hands. The

Peninsula free—the lawful commonwealth of European states already, in a great measure, restored, Great Britain may now appear in the congress of the world, rich in conquests, nobly and rightfully won, with little claim upon her faith or her justice, whatever may be the spontaneous impulse of her generosity or her moderation.

Such, gentlemen, is the situation and prospect of affairs at the moment at which I have the honour to address you. That you, gentlemen, may have your full share in the prosperity of your country, is my sincere and earnest wish. The courage with which you bore up in adverse circumstances, eminently entitles you to this reward.

For myself, gentlemen, while I rejoice in your returning prosperity, I rejoice also that our connection began under auspices so much less favourable; that we had an opportunity of knowing each other's minds in times when the minds of men are brought to the proof—times of trial and difficulty. I had the satisfaction of avowing to you, and you the candour and magnanimity to approve, the principles and opinions by which my public conduct has uniformly been guided, at a period when the soundness of those opinions, and the application of those principles, was matter of doubt and controversy. I thought, and I said, at the time of our first meeting, that the cause of England and of civilized Europe must be ultimately triumphant, if we but preserved our spirit untainted, and our constancy unshaken. Such an assertion was, at that time, the object of ridicule with many persons: a single year has elapsed, and it is now the voice of the whole world.

Gentlemen, we may, therefore, confidently indulge the hope, that our opinions will continue in unison; that our concurrence will be as cordial as it has hitherto been, if, unhappily, any new occasion of difficulty or embarrassment should hereafter arise.

At the present moment, I am sure, we are equally desirous to bury the recollection of all our differences with others in that general feeling of exultation in which all opinions happily combine.

SPEECH AT LIVERPOOL,

AFTER HAVING BEEN CHAIRED, THE 12TH OF JUNE, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

IF I could forget all the trouble and inconvenience which have been occasioned to you, and could contemplate the result of this day only as it affects myself, what reason should I not have to pour forth my gratitude to those men who have laboured against me with so vexatious an opposition! For, with whatever spirit and design they may have acted, I will venture to affirm, that never did the most anxious and active friendship procure for any individual such a triumph as their hostility has earned for me this day. They laboured to separate us from each other; and they have united us more closely than before. They hoped to efface the memory of that victory which crowned your former exertions in my favour: and they have, if not effaced, yet thrown it into the shade, by the transcendant splendour of this day's triumph, by the increased and overpowering demonstrations of your unwearied kindness and regard. Indebted to my opponents for the excitement which has called forth these demonstrations, what a heart must I have, gentlemen, if I did not bless their *beneficent* enmity!

But, gentlemen, proud as I naturally must be of what I have experienced this day, and exalted as I cannot but feel myself by the contemplation of the magnificent scene which is now before me, by the view of those countless multitudes, among which every eye is turned upon me with an expression of benignity; yet I do assure you, gentlemen, and there are those around me who can vouch for the truth of what I say, that I was most anxious—that it was my fixed purpose and determination, to entreat you to spare yourselves the trouble of this day's ceremony. I did not think that the occasion of returning your representative, on a re-election, called for any peculiar expression of triumph; nor did I think, that a victory over a non-existing, or non-appearing adversary, justified the same marks of exultation as when able, substantial antagonists had been driven from the field.

But, gentlemen, my mind was changed, and I yielded to the wishes of my friends, upon information which I have received to-day. The nature of that information I will state to you. I am assured from London, and upon testimony from which it is impossible for me to withhold my belief, that there were among our antagonists some who reckoned upon intimidation as an instrument of success. In the first moments of transport, at the promising commencement of the riots, they communicated this hope to their friends in the metropolis. They fondly flattered themselves that you, gentlemen, could be scared from my side, and that I should be forced to retire. Intimidation! how little do they know either me or you! After this information, I felt that it would be a false delicacy to abstain from any expressions of exultation, and that our conduct might be liable to misconstruction, if we abridged, by a single formality, the triumph of this day.

Gentlemen, with the election, let the local topics, the

local enmities, the local disagreements of the election cease. But cease not with the election the principles upon which your choice has been founded, on whomever, at any time hereafter, your choice may fall, whether on myself or on a worthier object. For, gentlemen, I know how little I ought to consider myself as contributing to the glorious result of this contest. Much less important is it to whom, individually, you commit your representation in Parliament, than that you should fix steadily in your minds the standard by which that representative shall be tried. Let him be a man true to the principles of the constitution, not as understood in the new-fangled doctrines of the day, but as transmitted to us from older times, before the pure current of British freedom had been contaminated by the influx of foreign theories.

Gentlemen, we all know, that, on the former occasion, in 1812, the eyes of England were, in a great measure, fixed upon Liverpool, as the *arena* in which the contest between two sets of political principles was to be decided. But on that occasion, gentlemen, though you occupied a great space in the public attention, you could not completely monopolize it. There was then a general election. The interest excited, indeed, by the Liverpool contest, was pretty widely diffused, but the actual war was among ourselves; no stranger had leisure to mingle in our battle. Among other consequences of this state of things, one was, that we were tolerably free from imported calumny; and that, considering the vehemence of the contest, there was, so far as I know, little of personal malignity mixed with it. In the present instance, Liverpool alone has fixed the undistracted attention of both parties, and upon me, in particular, have the full phials of whiggish wrath been discharged.

Standing thus exposed, I have had what some would call the misfortune, but what I must now esteem the sin-

gular happiness, of being a mark for the attacks of every political enemy that I have in the world. I do Liverpool the justice to acknowledge, gentlemen, that the grossest and foulest calumnies are not of native produce, but have been rolled down, in one tide of filth, from the fountain head of whiggish detraction in London. All the approved practices of the libellers of former periods have been resorted to: my private history ransacked for topics of abuse; every action, every inconsiderate word, of earlier life raked up, and recorded with malignant industry; and invention called in aid where research could find no theme of invective:—

> ——————"The lie, so oft o'erthrown,
> Th' imputed trash and nonsense, not my own;"

—all, all has been exhausted: and what is the result? That here I stand.

Gentlemen, amongst other charges, one of fair hostility, but whimsically chosen, considering the quarter from which it comes, is that of my being about to act in public life with men from whom I have occasionally differed in opinion. Gentlemen, the charge is substantially unfounded. It is unfounded, because, though, on particular questions, I may have differed from many of my present colleagues (as what two men may not occasionally differ, if each has an opinion of his own?) yet, upon all the great outlines of our political system, and upon every main principle affecting the foreign policy of England, our opinions have generally concurred. Those opinions I have, to the best of my power, supported, in whatever hands the government of the country has been placed. I have supported them not less strenuously when myself out of office, than when I formed a part of the Administration.

Gentlemen, I am really alarmed at the state of pressure

in which I see great part of the multitude below. Had I not better take leave of you, and entreat you to disperse?*

Perhaps, gentlemen, I was the more alive to the danger to which I apprehended you to be exposed, and the more anxious to dismiss you before any accident had happened, from recollecting, that one of the charges most frequently, of late, preferred against me is, my habit of addressing you. And yet, gentlemen, I am old enough to remember, when the great idol of whiggism himself† (of whom I mean to speak with all reverence and honour), in the plenitude of his glory, and in the maturity of his mighty powers, did not disdain to mount various *rostra*, and to descant, not to his constituents only, but to whoever would come to hear him, upon oppression, grievance, tyranny, taxes, and war, and all other matters best calculated to rouse the passions of the populace. Nor are there wanting imitators in our days, who pursue the same course, whenever the people will listen to them.

But, gentlemen, the self-styled whigs have a most convenient, though somewhat arbitrary, mode of argument. To them every mode of political warfare is lawful; but to them only: the people are their property; and wo be to the unlicensed intruder who presumes to trespass upon the manor. Or is this the distinction to be taken against me? Am I vilified, not because I address the people, but because I address them on the side of tranquillity and good order? That, instead of seeking out every topic of delusion and inflammation, I am more solicitous to bring before them

* Mr. Canning retired for a few moments, until the pressure of the crowd had, in some measure, diminished; and then, being loudly and repeatedly called for, again came forward.

† The Right Honourable Charles James Fox.

grounds for contentment, and motives of attachment to their country,—to inculcate their duties as well as their rights, and to hold them firm in their allegiance to the constitutional monarchy of England? Am I arraigned on an inverted construction of the rules of civilized warfare, not because I scatter arrows among the people, but because my arrows are not poisoned?

But, gentlemen, to recur to the point at which I was interrupted by my alarm for your safety. By the organ of what party is it that I am accused of inconsistency, for acting with men from whom I may have occasionally differed? Why, gentlemen, by the organ of a party whose birth and growth, whose essence and element, are coalition; a party which sprung from the coalition between Lord North and Mr. Fox, and which has been revived, within all our memories, by the coalition between Lord Grenville and Lord Grey; a party of which, in spite of all its coalitions, the members are, in reality, so little *coalescent*, that, but last year, on the greatest question which ever the Government of this country was called upon to decide and its Parliament to sanction—on the question of the renewal of the war against Bonaparte—they were divided half and half: and all that was of most weight or ornament in their party, fought the battle of the Ministers against the remainder. That remainder, indeed, true to their old creed, would have extended the doctrine of coalition to Bonaparte. But you, gentlemen, I know, have candour enough to do justice to public men, of whatever party, when they stand up fairly for their country; and you remember, with just acknowledgment, that the manly and consistent eloquence of Lord Grenville, the splendid enthusiasm of Grattan, and the commanding energy of Plunkett, were exerted, on that memorable occasion, in defence of that system of measures,

by which, in defiance of the whig policy, this country and Europe have been preserved.

Gentlemen, there is yet a heavier charge than either of those which I have stated to you. It is, gentlemen, that I am an adventurer. To this charge, as I understand it, I am willing to plead guilty. A representative of the people, I am one of the people; and I present myself to those who choose me only with the claims of character, (be they what they may,) unaccredited by patrician patronage or party recommendation. Nor is it in this free country, where, in every walk of life, the road of honourable success is open to every individual—I am sure it is not in this place, that I shall be expected to apologize for so presenting myself to your choice. I know there is a political creed, which assigns to a certain combination of great families a right to dictate to the sovereign and to influence the people; and that this doctrine of hereditary aptitude for administration is, singularly enough, most prevalent among those who find nothing more laughable than the principle of legitimacy in the Crown.

To this theory I have never subscribed. If to depend directly upon the people, as their representative in Parliament; if, as a servant of the Crown, to lean on no other support than that of public confidence—if that be to be an adventurer, I plead guilty to the charge, and I would not exchange that situation, to whatever taunts it may expose me, for all the advantages which might be derived from an ancestry of a hundred generations.

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer. I have said, that I will not go back to any of the events of the election. Suffice it, that, whatever may be my opinion with respect to the opposition which has been made to your wishes in my favour, I can truly say for myself, that I carry no re-

sentments away with me. Even were I disposed to entertain any such feelings, my heart would not, at this moment, have room for them, so full is it of the sense of your kindnesses, of acknowledgment, and of exultation.

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, IN THE MUSIC HALL, ON MONDAY, THE 29TH OF JUNE, 1818, AFTER HIS HEALTH HAD BEEN DRUNK.

GENTLEMEN,

IT was at my suggestion, that your worthy chairman had the goodness to make a slight alteration in the order of the toasts as they stand on the printed card, and to propose, before my health, which you have just done me the honour to drink, the health of those persons by whose suffrages I have been elevated to the situation of your representative, and of those who, had their suffrages been wanted, would have contributed to that elevation. It is in the natural order of things, gentlemen, that cause should precede effect; and, before you expressed your rejoicing on my return, I was anxious that due acknowledgment should have been paid to those whose votes, or whose intentions to come forward,—intentions as notorious and as efficacious as their votes,—gave effect to the wishes of this great community in my favour.

Gentlemen, six years have elapsed since I was first placed in that envied situation. Search the records of history,

where shall we find six years so fertile in events; and in events not only of such immense importance, but of such various character,—at one time so awful and appalling, at another so full of encouragement and of glory? We have, within this period of time, had war—peace—war again—and again a peace, which, I flatter myself, is now settling itself for a long duration.

In many of those changes, gentlemen, as they were taking place, and with respect to all of them while they were yet in doubtful futurity, the opinions which I hold with you, and by holding which with you I am alone worthy to represent you, have been controverted by predictions which, in prospect, it would have been presumptuous to dispute, but which, in retrospect, it is now pleasant to contemplate.

When I first, in obedience to your call, presented myself before you, it was at that period of a war, already of near twenty years' duration, in which the crisis of the fate of nations seemed to be arrived. It was at that period of the campaign, destined to be decisive of that war, in which the enemy appeared in his most gigantic dimensions, and had begun to run his most extravagant career. It would be little disparagement to the stoutest heart to say, that it shrunk from the contemplation of a might so overwhelming; and it required, perhaps, as much courage as sagacity to derive, from the ill-compounded materials of the colossus, a hope or an expectation of its fall. We were, indeed, loudly told at that time, that resistance was altogether hopeless; and you, gentlemen, were encouraged to believe, that if, by rejecting me, whose politics were supposed to be identified with the prosecution of the war, and by returning to Parliament, as your representatives, those who then solicited your suffrages in opposition to me, you would mark your disapprobation of the continuance of so hopeless

a contest, you would, by this demonstration of the opinion of so considerable a part of the British empire, infallibly produce a peace, with all its attendant blessings.

Against these fallacious but inviting assurances, with all the responsibility that belonged to the anticipation of brighter prospects in the midst of overwhelming gloom, and to the denial of associations familiar in the mouths and in the minds of men, I ventured to tell you that peace was not in your power, except through the road of victory; and I ventured to tell you further, that peace, if sought through any other path, would not be lasting; and that, come when it might, it would not come, in the first instance, with all the blessings of ordinary peace in its train.

At the end of the period which has elapsed, compare what I then said to you with what has actually taken place.

If, at the time of which I am speaking, in 1812, this great town had contributed its share towards forcing a change in the national councils, by rejecting the man whose political existence was identified with the success of the war, and by choosing others in his room whose reputation depended upon its failure; and if, gentlemen, you had had the misfortune to succeed in forcing such a change, I ask you whether you believe that England would have stood erect, as she has done, with her enemy prostrate at her feet, and with Europe saved by her assistance?

But, gentlemen, as if to defeat and discredit the professors of political prophecy, you have had also a trial of peace, not wholly corresponding with their anticipations. I told you, in 1812, that nothing was easier than to draw flattering views of distant prospects; but that there were circumstances to be taken into account in the estimate of war and peace which baffled calculation. I told you that

THE WAR (not WAR generally, as has falsely been imputed, but THE WAR in which we were then engaged) was, from its peculiar character, one in which, though the common characteristics of peace—such as tranquillity and absence of bloodshed, and freedom from alarm, were necessarily suspended, yet the springs of enterprise were not cut off, nor the activity of commerce altogether paralyzed: nor would the restoration of peace necessarily and at once restore the state of things which so long and so extraordinary a war had interrupted.

And why, gentlemen? Because I was desirous, as was, I say, falsely imputed to me, of dissociating the natural combinations of war and peace from their respective attributes?—of holding out war as, for its own sake desirable, and peace as, in itself, unlovely? No, gentlemen; but because I wished to represent to you things as they really were, or, at least, as, in my own honest judgment, I saw them; because I wished to dissipate the prejudices which were attempted to be raised against a war on the issue of which our national existence depended, by pressing into the service those common-place arguments against war which, however abstractedly true, were not true as to the war in question; and by holding out all those common-place inducements to peace, which, though also true in the abstract, could not have been true of any peace concluded on ignominious terms, and have not been found true of the first years of a peace succeeding to a war of such unexampled effort and protraction.

That the war had had the effect of opening unusual channels of commercial enterprise; that it had given a new and extraordinary stimulus to commercial activity and enterprise; that the war had created—I do not say a wholesome, I do not say a substantial, I do not say a permanent prosperity; but that it had created a prosperity

peculiar to itself, and which atoned, in some measure, for its evils, and enabled the country, in some measure, to bear up against the difficulties incident to war; all these were matters of fact, which, as such, I stated to you—and stated them as affording, not motives, but consolations—not inducements to prolong, beyond necessity, a war which might be safely terminated at will, but reasons for bearing patiently evils to which it was not in our power to put an end. That this was a forced and unnatural state of things, neither I nor any man pretended to deny; but whether we alone could enjoy a sound and natural repose, in the forced and unnatural state of Europe—whether any peace which could be made by us, while all Europe remained under the controul of our enemy, would be a peace worthy of the name; this was a question which might fairly be mooted, without depreciating the blessings of peace, or denying the general preferableness of peace to war. Our adversaries represented the war as uncompensated evil and voluntary self-infliction: peace, as unqualified prosperity, and as immediately within our grasp. My business—the business of truth—was to show, that THE WAR—though all war is full of evil—had yet mitigations, and, besides, would not cease at our bidding; that peace would not come at our call, and, besides, that when it came, it would bring with it its privations. The stimulus of the war withdrawn, manufacturing industry would necessarily languish: the channels of commerce, forced open by the war, having closed, commercial enterprise must necessarily be checked till new channels were explored; and the mere cessation of the "trade of war" itself, in all its various branches, must both discontinue the occupation of a population which it had created, and throw additional crowds on occupations already overstocked. Here were causes sufficient for the inevitable privations and derangements of a first year of

peace after any war, but much more after a war of such extraordinary magnitude and extension.

It required no great sagacity to foresee these things; but, in those who did foresee them, it would have been, at least, disingenuous to assert—or to suffer the assertions to go uncontroverted—that the war was our single and voluntary suffering, and that peace was not only attainable, but would be an instant and perfect cure.

Such, gentlemen, is the true account of that temporary stagnation of commercial industry and enterprise which has been insidiously imputed to national exhaustion; of the difficulty in providing employment for an exuberant population (the harvest of a long war) upon the sudden return of peace, and before the world had yet righted itself after all its convulsions.

Either our antagonists foresaw these immediate and necessary consequences of the discontinuance of war, or they did not. If they did foresee them, would it not have been fair to have shaded a little more carefully the bright prospects which they painted of the peace to come? If not, would it not be fair in them to acknowledge, that they had been too sanguine in their anticipations? But, what surely is not fair nor reasonable is, that no sooner was the peace which they had so long clamoured for obtained, than they proceeded with as much pathos as they had bestowed upon the evils of war, to deplore the sufferings of that moment which they had predicted as one of unqualified happiness.

They began their lamentations over languishing industry, and stinted commerce, and unemployed population; as if these evils were not the natural and necessary consequences of unavoidably operating causes; as if they were the creation of some malignant influence, which, whether in war or in peace, blighted the destinies of the country.

Is it intended to maintain this proposition, that, in order to produce the blessings with which peace ought to be accompanied, the war ought to have been concluded with defeat, and the peace to have been a peace of humiliation? If so, I can understand the arguments and acknowledge the consistency of those who pretend to have been disappointed at the tardy reappearance of the blessings which they promised us; for, undoubtedly, the war was concluded with triumphs, which must have deranged all the anticipations which were founded on the basis of unconditional surrender and submission.

But, gentlemen, labouring as I do under the imputation of being a great lover of war, I am almost afraid to say, that there are some things in the war which I regret, and some things in the peace which I like as little as even those privations of which we have been speaking, but which are, happily, in a course of daily diminution. The war divided the political parties of the country on one great question, which involved and absorbed all minor considerations. With war, party has not ceased; but our differences are of a sort more ignoble and more alarming. The line of demarcation during the war was—resistance or non-resistance to a foreign enemy: the line of demarcation now is—maintenance or subversion of our internal institutions.

Gentlemen, it does seem somewhat singular, and I conceive that the historian of future times will be at a loss to imagine how it should happen, that, at this particular period, at the close of a war of such unexampled brilliancy, in which this country had acted a part so much beyond its physical strength and its apparent resources, there should arise a sect of philosophers in this country, who begin to suspect something rotten in the British Constitution. The history of Europe for the last twenty-five years, is something like this. A power went forth, animated with the

spirit of evil, to overturn every community of the civilized world. Before this dreadful assailant, empires, and monarchies, and republics bowed: some were crushed to the earth, and some bought their safety by compromise. In the midst of this wide-spread ruin, among tottering columns and falling edifices, one fabric alone stood erect and braved the storm; and not only provided for its own internal security, but sent forth, at every portal, assistance to its weaker neighbours. On this edifice floated that ensign, [pointing to the English ensign], a signal of rallying to the combatant, and of shelter to the fallen.

To an impartial observer—I will not say to an inhabitant of this little fortress—to an impartial observer, in whatever part of the world, one should think something of this sort would have occurred. Here is a fabric constructed upon some principles not common to others in its neighbourhood; principles which enable it to stand erect while every thing is prostrate around it. In the construction of this fabric there must be some curious felicity, which the eye of the philosopher would be well employed in investigating, and which its neighbours may profit by adopting. This, I say, gentlemen, would have been an obvious inference. But what shall we think of their understandings who draw an inference directly the reverse? and who say to us—"You have stood when others have fallen; when others have crouched, you have borne yourselves aloft; you alone have resisted the power which has shaken and swallowed up half the civilized world. We like not this suspicious peculiarity. There must be something wrong in your internal conformation." With this unhappy curiosity, and in the spirit of this perverse analysis, they proceed to dissect our Constitution. They find that, like other states, we have a monarch; that a nobility, though not organized like ours, is common to all the great empires of Europe; but that our distinction

lies in a popular assembly, which gives life, and vigour, and strength to the whole frame of the Government. Here, therefore, they find the seat of our disease. Our peccant part is, undoubtedly, the House of Commons. Hence our presumptuous exemption from what was the common lot of all our neighbours: the anomaly ought forthwith to be corrected; and, therefore, the House of Commons must be reformed.

Gentlemen, it cannot but have struck you as somewhat extraordinary, that whereas, in speaking of foreign sovereigns, our reformers are never very sparing of uncourtly epithets; that whereas, in discussing the general principles of government, they seldom omit an opportunity of discrediting and deriding the privileged orders of society; yet, when they come to discuss the British Constitution, nothing can be more respectful than their language towards the Crown; nothing more forbearing than their treatment of the aristocracy. With the House of Commons alone they take the freedom of familiarity; upon it they pour out all the phials of their wrath, and exhaust their denunciations of amendment.

Gentlemen, this, though extraordinary, is not unintelligible. The reformers are wise in their generation. They know well enough—and have read plainly enough in our own history, that the prerogatives of the Crown and the privileges of the peerage would be but as dust in the balance against a preponderating democracy. They mean democracy, and nothing else. And, give them but a House of Commons constructed on their own principles—the peerage and the throne may exist for a day, but may be swept from the face of the earth by the first angry vote of such a House of Commons.

It is, therefore, utterly unnecessary for the reformers to declare hostility to the Crown; it is, therefore, utterly

superfluous for them to make war against the peerage. They know that, let but their principles have full play, the Crown and the peerage would be to the Constitution which they assail, but as the baggage to the army—and the destruction of them but as the gleanings of the battle. They know that the battle is with the House of Commons, as at present constituted; and that, *that* once overthrown, and another popular assembly constructed on their principle, as the creature and depository of the people's power, and the unreasoning instrument of the people's will, there would not only be no chance, but (I will go further for them in avowal, though not in intention, than they go for themselves) there would not be a pretence for the existence of any other branch of the Constitution.

Gentlemen, the whole fallacy lies in this: the reformers reason from false premises, and, therefore, are driving on their unhappy adherents to false and dangerous conclusions. The Constitution of this country is a monarchy, controlled by two assemblies; the one hereditary, and independent alike of the Crown and the people; the other elected by and for the people, but elected for the purpose of controlling and not of administering the Government. The error of the reformers, if error it can be called, is, that they argue as if the Constitution of this country was a broad and level democracy, inlaid (for ornament sake) with a peerage, and topped (by sufferance) with a Crown.

If they say, that, for such a Constitution, that is, in effect, for an uncontrolled democracy, the present House of Commons is not sufficiently popular, they are right; but such a Constitution is not what we have or what we desire. We are born under a monarchy, which it is our duty, as much as it is for our happiness, to preserve; and which there cannot be a shadow of doubt that the reforms which are recommended to us would destroy.

I love the monarchy, gentlemen, because, limited and controlled as it is in our happy Constitution, I believe it to be not only the safest depository of power, but the surest guardian of liberty. I love the system of popular representation, gentlemen;—who can have more cause to value it highly than I feel at this moment—reflecting on the triumphs which it has earned for me, and addressing those who have been the means of achieving them? But of popular representation, I think, we have enough for every purpose of jealous, steady, corrective, efficient control over the acts of that monarchical power, which, for the safety and for the peace of the community, is lodged in one sacred family, and descendible from sire to son.

If any man tell me, that the popular principle in the House of Commons is not strong enough for effective control, nor diffused enough to ensure sympathy with the people, I appeal to the whole course of the transactions of the last war; I desire to have cited to me the instances in which the House of Commons has failed, either to express the matured and settled opinion of the nation, or to convey it to the Crown. But I warn those who may undertake to make the citation, that they do not (as, in fact, they almost always do) substitute their own for the national opinion, and then complain of its having been imperfectly echoed in the House of Commons.

If, on the other hand, it be only meant to say, that the House of Commons is not the *whole government* of the country—which, if all power be not only *for* but *in* the people, the House of Commons ought to be, if the people were adequately represented—I answer, thank God it is not so!—God forbid it should ever aim at becoming so!

But they look far short of the ultimate effect of the doctrines of the present day, who do not see that their tendency is not to make a House of Commons such as, in theory, it

has always been defined—a third branch of the legislature; but to absorb the legislative and executive powers into one; to create an immediate delegation of the whole authority of the people—to which, practically, nothing could, and, in reasoning, nothing ought to stand in opposition.

Gentlemen, it would be well if these doctrines were the ebullitions of the moment, and ended with the occasions which naturally give them their freest play; I mean, with the season of popular elections. But, unfortunately, disseminated as they are among all ranks of the community, they are doing permanent and incalculable mischief. How lamentably is experience lost on mankind! for when—in what age, in what country of the world—have doctrines of this sort been reduced to practice, without leading, through anarchy, to military despotism? The revolution of the seasons is not more certain than is this connection of events in the course of moral nature.

Gentlemen, to theories like these you will do me the justice to remember that I have always opposed myself; not more since I have had the honour to represent this community, than when I was uncertain how far my opinions on such subjects might coincide with yours.

For opposing these theories, gentlemen, I have become an object of peculiar obloquy; but I have borne that obloquy with the consciousness of having discharged my duty; and with the consolation, that the time was not far distant when I should come here among you, (to whom alone I owe an account of my public conduct,)—when I should have an opportunity of hearing from you, whether I had (as I flattered myself) spoken the sense of the second commercial community in England; and when, if—unfortunately and contrary to my belief—I had separated myself in opinion from you, I should learn the grounds of that separation.

Gentlemen, my object, in political life, has always been, rather to reconcile the nation to the lot which has fallen to them (surely a most glorious and blessed lot among nations!) than to aggravate incurable imperfections, and to point out imaginary and unattainable excellencies for their admiration. I have done so, because though I am aware that more splendidly popular systems of government might be devised than that which it is our happiness to enjoy, it is, I believe in my conscience, impossible to devise one in which all the good qualities of human nature should be brought more beneficially into action—in which there should be as much order and as much liberty—in which property (the conservative principle of society) should operate so fairly, with a just but not an overwhelming weight—in which industry should be so sure of its reward, talents of their due ascendancy, and virtue of the general esteem.

The theories of preternatural purity are founded on a notion of doing away with all these accustomed relations—of breaking all the ties by which society is held together. Property is to have no influence—talents no respect—virtue no honour, among their neighbourhood. Naked, abstract political rights are to be set up against the authorities of nature and of reason: and the result of suffrages, thus freed from all the ordinary influences which have operated upon mankind from the beginning of the world, is to be—the erection of some untried system of politics, of which it may be sufficient to say, that it could not last a day—that, if it rose with the mists of the morning, it would dissolve in the noontide sun.

Gentlemen, one ill consequence of these brilliant schemes, even where they are the visions of unsound imagination, rather than the suggestions of crafty mischief, is, that they tend to dissatisfy the minds of the uninformed with the actual Constitution of their country.

To maintain that Constitution has been the unvarying object of my political life: and the maintenance of it, in these latter days, has, I have said, exposed me to obloquy and to hatred;—to the hatred of those who believe either their own reputation for sagacity, or their own means of success, to be connected with a change in the present institutions of the country.

We have heard something of numbers in the course of the present election; and there is in numbers, I confess, a coincidence which gratifies and pleases me. The number *three hundred* was that of the majority which assured my return. It is the number, I am informed, of those who are assembled here to greet me this day. The last time that I heard of the number *three hundred*, in a way at all interesting to myself, was in an intimation, publicly conveyed to me, that precisely that number of heroes had bound themselves, by oath to each other, to assassinate me. Gentlemen, against my three hundred assassins I put my three hundred friends, and I feel neither my life nor my popularity in danger.

Mr. Canning concluded by expressing his acknowledgments for the honour done him in drinking his health, and by proposing that of the worthy chairman.

SPEECH

AT A PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL IN 1818, AFTER THE HEALTH OF "THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM HUSKISSON, AND THANKS TO HIM FOR HIS ATTENTION TO THE INTERESTS OF LIVERPOOL," HAD BEEN DRUNK.

GENTLEMEN,

I rise to return my own thanks, and those which, I am sure, I should have been commissioned by my right honourable friend to return in his name, for the manner in which you have done him the honour to drink his health;—a man whom I never can describe more aptly that I once had occasion to describe him to some among you; as being, what he undoubtedly is, the *best man of business in England:*—a man whose extraordinary talents, matured by long reflection and long experience, have qualified him as one of the ablest practical statesmen that could be engaged in the concerns of a commercial country.

Gentlemen, the praises which you have justly bestowed on him recall to my recollection a debt of gratitude which I owe to you, for the indulgence received from you two years ago; which gave him, during my absence, those opportunities of serving you that have won so deservedly upon your regard and esteem. Gentlemen, you may be assured for him, that, however totally disconnected from you, as you may be assured for me, whenever our connection may cease, we shall be anxious to promote, by all means in our power, the interests of Liverpool; not only from sentiments of gratitude, but because we are quite convinced,

that, in promoting the interests of this great commercial town, we secure to the general prosperity of Great Britain one of its most useful and efficient supports. I will not say, that if the interests of the nation were in any instance at variance with those of Liverpool, even as your member I would take your part; but I will say, that whether your member or no, I shall always retain the same desire—not to benefit you by any partial sacrifice of the general good in your favour, but—to advance your greatness and prosperity, which are but the samples and epitome of the greatness and prosperity of England.

Gentlemen, you have just recognised, in the toast which preceded the health of my right honourable friend, that identity between the landed and commercial interests of the kingdom, the principle of which I am taking the liberty to inculcate. The one interest is, indeed, inherent in the soil, and inseparable from it. But that soil is increased tenfold in its value, and the tenure by which it is held is increased tenfold in its security, by that commercial enterprise which augments the wealth of the kingdom, and strengthens the sinews of its maritime power.

The consent of different orders is the strength and safety of the state. To set one class of society against another is to endanger the whole. How much more when, as in the miserable politics of the present day, an attempt is made to set the poor against the rich, for the common destruction of both?

Gentlemen, your example and your authority may do much among the multitude whom you employ, to protect them against the poison of such doctrines; to satisfy them, that, as your prosperity depends upon the general prosperity of the empire, so do their happiness and comfort depend upon the maintenance of that order, which not only

consists with liberty, but is essential to it, and of that commerce of which liberty and order are the guardians.

Gentlemen, I now take leave of you,—with a sentiment which is not the less valuable because it is homely in its phrase, and which will convey, though it does not fully express, all my good wishes for your prosperity and happiness: I beg leave to give—"The good old town of Liverpool, and the trade thereof."

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, GIVEN IN HONOUR OF MR. CANNING'S RE-ELECTION, IN THE MUSIC-HALL, ON SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1820.

GENTLEMEN,

Short as the interval is since I last met you in this place on a similar occasion, the events which have filled up that interval have not been unimportant. The great moral disease which we then talked of as gaining ground on the community has, since that period, arrived at its most extravagant height; and, since that period also, remedies have been applied to it, if not of permanent cure, at least of temporary mitigation.

Gentlemen, with respect to those remedies—I mean with respect to the transactions of the last short session of Parliament previous to the dissolution—I feel that it is my duty, as your representative, to render to you some account of the part which I took in that assembly to which you sent

me; I feel it my duty also, as a member of the Government by which those measures were advised. Upon occasions of such trying exigency as those which we have lately experienced, I hold it to be of the very essence of our free and popular constitution, that an unreserved interchange of sentiment should take place between the representative and his Constituents; and if it accidentally happens, that he who addresses you as your representative, stands also in the situation of a responsible adviser of the Crown, I recognize in that more rare occurrence a not less striking or less valuable peculiarity of that Constitution under which we have the happiness to live,—by which a Minister of the Crown is brought into contact with the great body of the community; and the service of the King is shown to be a part of the service of the people.

Gentlemen, it has been one advantage of the transactions of the last session of Parliament, that while they were addressed to meet the evils which had grown out of charges heaped upon the House of Commons, they have also, in a great measure, falsified the charges themselves.

I would appeal to the recollection of every man who now hears me,—of any, the most careless estimator of public sentiment, or the most indifferent spectator of public events, whether any country, in any two epochs, however distant, of its history, ever presented such a contrast with itself as this country in November, 1819, and this country in February, 1820? Do I exaggerate when I say, that there was not a man of property who did not tremble for his possessions?—that there was not a man of retired and peaceable habits who did not tremble for the tranquillity and security of his home?—that there was not a man of orderly and religious principles who did not fear that those principles were about to be cut from under the feet of suc-

ceeding generations? Was there any man who did not apprehend the Crown to be in danger? Was there any man, attached to the other branches of the Constitution, who did not contemplate with anxiety and dismay the rapid, and, apparently, irresistible diffusion of doctrines hostile to the very existence of Parliament as at present constituted, and calculated to excite, not hatred and contempt merely, but open and audacious force, especially against the House of Commons?—What is, in these respects, the situation of the country now? Is there a man of property who does not feel the tenure by which he holds his possessions to have been strengthened? Is there a man of peace who does not feel his domestic tranquillity to have been secured? Is there a man of moral and religious principles who does not look forward with better hope to see his children educated in those principles?—who does not hail, with renewed confidence, the revival and re-establishment of that moral and religious sense which had been attempted to be obliterated from the hearts of mankind?

Well, gentlemen, and what has intervened between the two periods? A calling of that degraded Parliament; a meeting of that scoffed-at and derided House of Commons; a concurrence of those three branches of an imperfect Constitution, not one of which, if we are to believe the radical reformers, lived in the hearts, or swayed the feelings, or commanded the respect of the nation; but which, despised as they were while in a state of separation and inaction, did, by a co-operation of four short weeks, restore order, confidence, a reverence for the laws, and a just sense of their own legitimate authority.

Another event, indeed, has intervened, in itself of a most painful nature, but powerful in aiding and confirming the impressions which the assembling and the proceedings of

Parliament were calculated to produce. I mean the loss which the nation has sustained by the death of a Sovereign, with whose person all that is venerable in monarchy has been identified in the eyes of successive generations of his subjects; a Sovereign whose goodness, whose years, whose sorrows and sufferings, must have softened the hearts of the most ferocious enemies of kingly power; whose active virtues, and the memory of whose virtues, when it pleased Divine Providence that they should be active no more, have been the guide and guardian of his people through many a weary and many a stormy pilgrimage; scarce less a guide, and quite as much a guardian, in the cloud of his evening darkness, as in the brightness of his meridian day.

That such a loss, and the recollections and reflections naturally arising from it, must have had a tendency to revive and refresh the attachment to monarchy, and to root that attachment deeper in the hearts of the people, might easily be shown by reasoning; but a feeling, truer than all reasoning, anticipates the result, and renders the process of argument unnecessary. So far, therefore, has this great calamity brought with it its own compensation, and conspired to the restoration of peace throughout the country with the measures adopted by Parliament.

And, gentlemen, what was the character of those measures?—The best eulogy of them I take to be this: it may be said of them, as has been said of some of the most consummate productions of literary art, that, though no man beforehand had exactly anticipated the scope and the details of them, no man, when they were laid before him, did not feel that they were precisely such as he would himself have suggested. So faithfully adapted to the case which they were framed to meet, so correctly adjusted to the degree

and nature of the mischief they were intended to controul, that, while we all feel that they have done their work, I think none will say there has been any thing in them of excess or supererogation.

We were loudly assured by the reformers, that the test, throughout the country, by which those who were ambitious of seats in the new Parliament would be tried, was to be—whether they had supported those measures. I have inquired, with as much diligence as was compatible with my duties here, after the proceedings of other elections; and, I protest I know no place yet, besides the hustings of Westminster and Southwark, at which that menaced test has been put to any candidates. To me, indeed, it was not put as a test, but objected as a charge. You know how that charge was answered: and the result is to me a majority of 1,300 out of 2,000 voters upon the poll.

But, gentlemen, though this question has not, as was threatened, been the watchword of popular elections, every other effort has, nevertheless, been industriously employed to persuade the people, that their liberties have been essentially abridged by the regulation of popular meetings. Against that one of the measures passed by Parliament, it is that the attacks of the radical reformers have been particularly directed. Gentlemen, the first answer to this averment is, that the act leaves untouched all the constitutional modes of assembly which have been known to the nation since it became free. We are fond of dating our freedom from the Revolution. I should be glad to know in what period, since the Revolution (up to a very late period indeed, which I will specify)—in what period of those reigns growing out of the Revolution—I mean, of the first reigns of the House of Brunswick—did it enter into the head of man, that such meetings could be holden,

or that the Legislature would tolerate the holding of such meetings, as disgraced this kingdom for some months previous to the last session of Parliament? When, therefore, it is asserted, that such meetings were never before suppressed, the simple answer is—they were never before systematically attempted to be holden.

I verily believe, the first meeting of the kind that was ever attempted and tolerated (I know of none anterior to it) was that called by Lord George Gordon, in St. George's-fields, in the year 1780, which led to the demolition of chapels and dwelling-houses, the breaking of prisons, and the conflagration of London. Was England never free till 1780? Did British liberty spring to light from the ashes of the metropolis? What! was there no freedom in the reign of George the Second? None in that of George the First? None in the reign of Queen Anne or of King William? Beyond the Revolution I will not go. But I have always heard, that British liberty was established long before the commencement of the late reign; nay, that in the late reign (according to popular politicians) it rather sunk and retrograded: and yet never till that reign was such an abuse of popular meetings dreamt of, much less erected into a right, not to be questioned by magistrates, and not to be controlled by Parliament.

Do I deny, then, the general right of the people to meet, to petition, or to deliberate upon their grievances? God forbid! But social right is not a simple, abstract, positive, unqualified term. Rights are, in the same individual, to be compared with his duties; and rights in one person are to be balanced with the rights of others. Let us take this right of meeting in its most extended construction and most absolute sense. The persons who called the meeting at Manchester tell you, that they had a right to collect together countless multitudes to discuss the question of

parliamentary reform: to collect them when they would and where they would, without consent of magistrates, or concurrence of inhabitants, or reference to the comfort or convenience of the neighbourhood. May not the peaceable, the industrious inhabitant of Manchester say, on the other hand, "I have a right to quiet in my house; I have a right to carry on my manufactory, on which not my existence only and that of my children, but that of my workmen and their numerous families depends. I have a right to be protected in the exercise of this my lawful calling; I have a right to be protected, not against violence and plunder only, against fire and sword, but against the terror of these calamities, and against the risk of these inflictions; against the intimidation or seduction of my workmen; or against the distraction of that attention and the interruption of that industry, without which neither they nor I can gain our livelihood. I call upon the laws to afford me that protection; and, if the laws in this country cannot afford it, depend upon it, I and my manufacturers must emigrate to some country where they can." Here is a conflict of rights, between which what is the decision? Which of the two claims is to give way? Can any reasonable being doubt? Can any honest man hesitate? Let private justice or public expediency decide, and can the decision by possibility be other, than that the peaceable and industrious shall be protected—the turbulent and mischievous put down?

But what similarity is there between tumults such as these, and an orderly meeting, recognised by the law for all legitimate purposes of discussion or petition? God forbid, that there should not be modes of assembly by which every class of this great nation may be brought together to deliberate on any matters connected with their interest and their freedom. It is, however, an inversion of the natural order of things, it is a disturbance of the settled course of

society, to represent discussion as every thing, and the ordinary occupations of life as nothing. To protect the peaceable in their ordinary occupations, is as much the province of the laws, as to provide opportunities of discussion for every purpose to which it is necessary and properly applicable. The laws do both; but it is no part of the contrivance of the laws, that immense multitudes should wantonly be brought together, month after month, and day after day, in places where the very bringing together of a multitude is of itself the source of terror and of danger.

It is no part of the provision of the laws, nor is it in the spirit of them, that such multitudes should be brought together at the will of unauthorized and irresponsible individuals, changing the scene of meeting as may suit their caprice or convenience, and fixing it where they have neither property, nor domicile, nor connection. The spirit of the law goes directly the other way. It is, if I may so express myself, eminently a spirit of corporation. Counties, parishes, townships, guilds, professions, trades, and callings, form so many local and political subdivisions, into which the people of England are distributed by the law: and the pervading principle of the whole is that of vicinage or neighbourhood; by which each man is held to act under the view of his neighbours; to lend his aid to them, to borrow theirs; to share their councils, their duties, and their burdens; and to bear with them his share of responsibility for the acts of any of the members of the community of which he forms a part.

Observe, I am not speaking here of the reviled and discredited statute law only, but of that venerable common law to which our reformers are so fond of appealing on all occasions, against the statute law by which it is modified, explained, or enforced. Guided by the spirit of the one, no less than by the letter of the other, what man is there in

this country who cannot point to the portion of society to which he belongs? If injury is sustained, upon whom is the injured person expressly entitled to come for redress? Upon the hundred, or the division in which he has sustained the injury. On what principle? On the principle, that as the individual is amenable to the division of the community to which he specially belongs, so neighbours are answerable for each other. Just laws, to be sure, and admirable equity, if a stranger is to collect a mob which is to set half Manchester on fire; and the burnt half is to come upon the other half for indemnity, while the stranger goes off, unquestioned, to excite the like tumult and produce the like danger elsewhere!

That such was the nature, such the tendency, nay, that such, in all human probability, might have been the result, of meetings like that of the 16th of August, who can deny? Who that weighs all the particulars of that day, comparing them with the rumours and the threats that preceded it, will dispute that such might have been the result of that very meeting, if that meeting, so very legally assembled, had not, by the happy decision of the magistrates, been so very illegally dispersed?

It is, therefore, not in consonance, but in contradiction to the spirit of the law, that such meetings have been holden. The law prescribes a corporate character. The callers of these meetings have always studiously avoided it. No summons of freeholders—none of freemen—none of the inhabitants of particular places or parishes—no acknowledgment of local or political classification. Just so at the beginning of the French Revolution: the first work of the reformers was to loosen every established political relation, every legal holding of man to man; to destroy every corporation, to dissolve every subsisting class of society, and to reduce the nation into individuals, in order, afterwards, to congregate them into mobs.

Let no person, therefore, run away with the notion, that these things were done without design. To bring together the inhabitants of a particular division, or men sharing a common franchise, is to bring together an assembly, of which the component parts act with some respect and awe of each other. Ancient habits, which the reformers would call prejudices; preconceived attachments, which they would call corruption; that mutual respect which makes the eye of a neighbour a security for each man's good conduct, but which the reformers would stigmatize as a confederacy among the few for dominion over their fellows;—all these things make men difficult to be moved, on the sudden, to any extravagant and violent enterprize. But bring together a multitude of individuals, having no permanent relation to each other—no common tie, but what arises from their concurrence as members of that meeting, a tie dissolved as soon as the meeting is at an end; in such an aggregation of individuals there is no such mutual respect, no such check upon the proceedings of each man from the awe of his neighbour's disapprobation; and, if ever a multitudinous assembly can be wrought up to purposes of mischief, it will be an assembly so composed.

How monstrous is it to confound such meetings with the genuine and recognised modes of collecting the sense of the English people! Was it by meetings such as these that the Revolution was brought about, that grand event, to which our antagonists are so fond of referring? Was it by meetings in St. George's-fields? in Spa-fields? in Smithfield? Was it by untold multitudes collected in a village in the north? No! It was by the meeting of corporations, in their corporate capacity;—by the assembly of recognised bodies of the state; by the interchange of opinions among portions of the community known to each other, and capable of estimating each other's views and

characters. Do we want a more striking mode of remedying grievances than this? Do we require a more animating example? And did it remain for the reformers of the present day to strike out the course by which alone Great Britain could make and keep herself free?

Gentlemen, all power is, or ought to be, accompanied by responsibility. Tyranny is irresponsible power. This definition is equally true, whether the power be lodged in one or many;—whether in a despot, exempted by the form of government from the controul of law; or in a mob, whose numbers put them beyond the reach of law. Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of freedom where a mob domineers! Idle, therefore, and absurd, to talk of liberty, when you hold your property, perhaps your life, not indeed at the nod of a despot, but at the will of an inflamed, an infuriated populace! If, therefore, during the reign of terror at Manchester, or at Spa-fields, there were persons in this country who had a right to complain of tyranny, it was they who loved the Constitution, who loved the monarchy, but who dared not utter their opinions or their wishes until their houses were barricaded, and their children sent to a place of safety. That was tyranny! and, so far as the mobs were under the controul of a leader, that was despotism! It was against that tyranny, it was against that despotism, that Parliament at length raised its arm.

All power, I say, is vicious that is not accompanied by proportionate responsibility. Personal responsibility prevents the abuse of individual power: responsibility of character is the security against the abuse of collective power, when exercised by bodies of men whose existence is permanent and defined. But strip such bodies of these qualities, you degrade them into multitudes, and then what security have you against any thing that they may do or resolve, knowing that, from the moment at which the meet-

ing is at an end, there is no human being responsible for their proceedings? The meeting at Manchester, the meeting at Birmingham, the meeting at Spa-fields or Smithfield, what pledge could they give to the nation of the soundness or sincerity of their designs? The local character of Manchester, the local character of Birmingham, was not pledged to any of the proceedings to which their names were appended. A certain number of ambulatory tribunes of the people, self-elected to that high function, assumed the name and authority of whatever place they thought proper to select for a place of meeting; their rostrum was pitched, sometimes here, sometimes there, according to the fancy of the mob, or the patience of the magistrates; but the proposition and the proposer were in all places nearly alike; and when, by a sort of political ventriloquism, the same voice had been made to issue from half-a-dozen different corners of the country, it was impudently assumed to be a concord of sweet sounds, composing the united voice of the people of England!

Now, gentlemen, let us estimate the mighty mischief that has been done to liberty by putting down meetings such as I have described. Let us ask, what lawful authority has been curtailed; let us ask, what respectable community has been defrauded of its franchise; let us ask, what municipal institutions have been violated by a law which fixes the migratory complaint to the spot whence it professes to originate, and desires to hear of the grievance from those by whom that grievance is felt;—which leaves to Manchester, as Manchester, to Birmingham, as Birmingham, to London, as London, all the free scope of utterance which they have at any time enjoyed for making known their wants, their feelings, their wishes, their remonstrances;—which leaves to each of these divisions its separate authority—to the union of all or of many of them the aggregate authority of

such a consent and co-operation; but which denies to an itinerant hawker of grievances the power of stamping their names upon his wares; of pretending, because he may raise an outcry *at* Manchester or *at* Birmingham, that he therefore speaks the sense of the town which he disquiets and endangers; or, still more preposterously, that because he has disquieted and endangered half-a-dozen neighbourhoods in their turn, he is, therefore, the organ of them all, and, through them, of the whole British people.

Such are the stupid fallacies which the law of the last session has extinguished! and such are the object and effect of the measures which British liberty is not to survive!

To remedy the dreadful wound thus inflicted upon British liberty,—to restore to the people what the people have not lost—to give a new impulse to that spirit of freedom which nothing has been done to embarrass or restrain, we are invited to alter the constitution of that assembly through which the people share in the legislature; in short, to make a radical reform in the House of Commons.

It has always struck me as extraordinary, that there should be persons prepared to entertain the question of a change in so important a member of the Constitution, without considering in what way that change must affect the situation of the other members, and the action of the Constitution itself.

I have, on former occasions, stated here, and I have stated elsewhere, questions on this subject, to which, as yet, I have never received an answer. "You who propose to reform the House of Commons, do you mean to restore that branch of the legislature to the same state in which it stood at some former period? or do you mean to re-construct it on new principles?"

Perhaps a moderate reformer or whig will answer, that he means only to restore the House of Commons to what it

was at some former period. I then beg to ask him—and to that question, also, I have never yet received an answer—"At what period of our history was the House of Commons in the state to which you wish to restore it?"

The House of Commons must, for the purpose of clear argument, be considered in two views. First, with respect to its agency as a third part in the Constitution: secondly, with respect to its composition, in relation to its constituents. As to its agency as a part of the Constitution, I venture to say, without hazard, as I believe, of contradiction, that there is no period in the history of this country in which the House of Commons will be found to have occupied so large a share of the functions of Government as at present. Whatever else may be said of the House of Commons, this one point, at least, is indisputable, that from the earliest infancy of the Constitution, the power of the House of Commons has been growing, till it has almost, like the rod of Aaron, absorbed its fellows. I am not saying whether this is or is not as it ought to be. I am merely saying why I think that it cannot be intended to complain of the want of power, and of a due share in the Government, as the defect of the modern House of Commons.

I admit, however, very willingly, that the greater share of power the House of Commons exercises, the more jealous we ought to be of its composition: and I presume, therefore, that it is in this respect, and in relation to its constituents, that the state of that House is contended to want revision. Well, then, at what period of our history was the composition of the history of the House of Commons materially different from what it is at present? Is there any period of our history in which the rights of election were not as various, in which the influence of property was not as direct, in which recommendations of candidates were not as efficient, and some boroughs as close as they are

now? I ask for information: but that information, plain and simple as it is, and necessary, one should think, to a clear understanding, much more to a grave decision of the point at issue, I never, though soliciting it with all humility, have ever yet been able to obtain from any reformer, radical or whig.

The radical reformer, indeed, to do him justice, is not bound to furnish me with an answer to this question, because with *his* view of the matter, precedents (except one, which I shall mention presently) have nothing to do. The radical reformer would, probably, give to my first question an answer very different from that which I have supposed his moderate brother to give. He will tell me fairly, that he means not simply to bring the House of Commons back, either to the share of power which it formerly enjoyed, or to the modes of election by which it was formerly chosen; but to make it what, according to him, it ought to be—a direct, effectual representative of the people; representing them not as a delegate commissioned to take care of their interests, but as a deputy appointed to speak their will. Now to this view of the matter, I have no other objection than this:—that the British Constitution is a limited monarchy; that a limited monarchy is, in the nature of things, a mixed government; but that such a House of Commons as the radical reformer requires would, in effect, constitute a pure democracy; a power, as it appears to me, inconsistent with any monarchy, and unsusceptible of any limitation.

I may have great respect for the person who theoretically prefers a republic to a monarchy. But, even supposing me to agree with him in his preference, I should have a preliminary question to discuss, by which he, perhaps, may not feel himself embarrassed; which is this, whether I, born as I am (and as *I* think it is my good fortune to be) under a monarchy, am quite at liberty to con-

sider myself as having a clear stage for political experiments; whether I should be authorised, if I were convinced of the expediency of such a change, to withdraw monarchy altogether from the British Constitution, and to substitute an unqualified democracy in its stead: or whether, whatever changes I may be desirous of introducing, I am not bound to consider the Constitution which I find as at least circumscribing the range, and, in some measure, prescribing the nature, of the improvement.

For my own part, I am, undoubtedly, prepared to uphold the ancient monarchy of the country, by arguments drawn from what I think the blessings which we have enjoyed under it; and by arguments of another sort, if arguments of another sort shall ever be brought against it. But all that I am now contending for is, that whatever reformation is proposed, should be considered with some reference to the established Constitution of the country. That point being conceded to me, I have no difficulty in saying, that I cannot conceive a Constitution of which one-third part shall be an assembly delegated by the people—not to consult for the good of the nation, but to speak, day by day, the people's will—which must not, in a few days' sitting, sweep away every other branch of the Constitution that might attempt to oppose or controul it. I cannot conceive how, in fair reasoning, any other branch of the Constitution should pretend to stand against it. If Government be a matter of will, all that we have to do is to collect the will of the nation, and, having collected it by an adequate organ, that will is paramount and supreme. By what pretension could the House of Lords be maintained in equal authority and jurisdiction with the House of Commons, when once that House of Commons should become a direct deputation, speaking the people's will, and that will the rule of the Government? In one way or other

the House of Lords must act, if it be to remain a concurrent branch of the legislature. Either it must uniformly affirm the measures which come from the House of Commons, or it must, occasionally, take the liberty to reject them. If it uniformly affirm, it is without the shadow of authority. But to presume to reject an act of the deputies of the whole nation!—by what assumption of right could three or four hundred great proprietors set themselves against the national will? Grant the reformers, then, what they ask, on the principles on which they ask it, and it is utterly impossible that, after such a reform, the Constitution should long consist of more than one body, and that one body a popular assembly.

Why, gentlemen, is this theory? or is it a theory of mine? If there be, among those who hear me, any man who has been (as in the generous enthusiasm of youth any man may blamelessly have been) bitten by the doctrines of reform, I implore him, before he goes forward in his progress to embrace those doctrines in their radical extent, to turn to the history of the transactions in this country in the year 1648, and to examine the bearings of those transactions on this very question of radical reform. He will find, gentlemen, that the House of Commons of that day passed the following resolution:—

"Resolved, that the people are, under God, the original of all just power."

Well!—can any sentiment be more just and reasonable? Is it not the foundation of all the liberties of mankind? Be it so. Let us proceed. The House of Commons followed up this resolution by a second, which runs in something like these terms:—

"Resolved, that the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, being chosen by and representing the people, *have the supreme authority* of this nation."

In this resolution the leap is taken. Do the radical reformers deny the premises or the inference? or do they adopt the whole of the tempting precedent before them?

But the inference did not stop there. The House of Commons proceeded to deduce, from these propositions, an inference, the apparently logical dependance of which upon these propositions I wish I could see logically disproved.

"Resolved, (without one dissenting voice,) That whatsoever is enacted and declared law by the Commons of England, assembled in Parliament, hath the force of law, and all the people of this nation are included thereby, *although the consent and concurrence of the King and House of Peers be not had thereunto.*"

Such was the theory: the practical inferences were not tardy in their arrival, after the theory. In a few weeks the House of Peers* was voted useless. We all know what became of the Crown.

Such, I say, were the radical doctrines of 1648, and such the consequences to which they naturally led. If we are induced to admit the same premises now, who is it, I should be glad to know, that is to guarantee us against similar conclusions?

These, then, are the reasons why I look with jealousy at schemes of parliamentary reform. I look at them with still more jealousy, because, in one of the two classes of men who co-operate in support of that question, I never yet

* "The same day (January 30, 1648-9) the Lords desired a conference with the Commons about settling the Government, and the administration of justice, the judges' commissions being determined by the death of the King. The Commons, without answering the messenger, voted the Lords to be useless and dangerous, and therefore to be abolished."—*Rapin, fo. vol. ii. p.* 574.

found any two individuals who held the same doctrines; I never yet heard any intelligible theory of reform, except that of the radical reformers. Theirs, indeed, it is easy enough to understand. But as for theirs, I certainly am not yet fully prepared. I, for my part, will not consent to take one step, without knowing on what principle I am invited to take it, and (which is, perhaps, of more consequence), without declaring on what principle, I will *not* consent that any step, however harmless, shall be taken.

What more harmless than to disfranchise a corrupt borough in Cornwall, which has exercised its franchise amiss, and brought shame on itself, and on the system of which it is a part?—Nothing. I have no sort of objection to doing, as Parliament has often done in such cases, (supposing always the case to be proved,)—to disfranchising the borough, and rendering it incapable of abusing its franchise in future. But, though I have no objection to doing this, I will *not* do it on the principle of speculative improvement. I do it on the principle of specific punishment for an offence. And I will take good care, that no inference shall be drawn from my consent in this specific case, as to any sweeping concurrence in a scheme of general alteration.

Nay, I should think it highly disingenuous to suffer the radical reformers to imagine that they had gained a single step towards the admission of their theory, by any such instance of particular animadversion on proved misconduct. I consent to such disfranchisement; but I do so, not with a view of furthering the radical system—rather of thwarting it. I am willing to wipe out any blot in the present system, because I mean the present system to stand. I will take away a franchise, because it has been practically abused; not because I am at all disposed to inquire into the origin or to discuss the utility of all such franchises, any more than I mean to inquire, gentlemen, into your titles

to your estates. Disfranchising Grampound, (if that is to be so,) I mean to save Old Sarum.

Now, Sir, I think I deal fairly with the radical reformers; more fairly than those who would suffer it to be supposed by them, that the disfranchisement of Grampound is to be the beginning of a system of reform: while they know, and I hope mean as well as I do, *not* to reform (in the sense of change) but to preserve the Constitution. I would not delude the reformers, if I could; and it is quite useless to attempt a delusion upon persons quite as sagacious in their generation as any moderate reformers or anti-reformers of us all. They know full well, that the whigs have no more notion than I have of parting with the close boroughs. Not they, indeed! A large, and perhaps the larger, part of them are in their hands. Why, in the assembly to which you send me, gentlemen, some of those who sit on the same side with me represent, to be sure, less popular places, than Liverpool—but on the bench immediately over against me, I descry, amongst the most eminent of our rivals for power, scarce any other sort of representatives than members for close, or if you will, for rotten boroughs. To suppose, therefore, that our political opponents have any thoughts of getting rid of the close boroughs, would be a gross delusion; and, I have no doubt, they will be quite as fair and open with the reformers on this point as I am.

And why, gentlemen, is it that I am satisfied with a system which, it is said, no man can support who is not in love with corruption? Is it that I, more than any other man, am afraid to face a popular election? To the last question you can give the answer. To the former, I will answer for myself. I do verily believe, as I have already said, that a complete and perfect democratical representation, such as the reformers aim at, cannot exist as part of a

mixed government. It may exist, and for aught I know or care, may exist beneficially as a whole. But I am not sent to Parliament to inquire into the question, whether a democracy or a monarchy be the best. My lot is cast under the British monarchy. Under that I have lived—under that I have seen my country flourish—under that I have seen it enjoy as great a share of prosperity, of happiness, and of glory as I believe any modification of human society to be capable of bestowing; and I am not prepared to sacrifice or to hazard the fruit of centuries of experience, of centuries of struggles, and of more than one century of liberty, as perfect as ever blessed any country upon the earth, for visionary schemes of ideal perfectibility, or for doubtful experiments even of possible improvement.

I am, therefore, for the House of Commons as a part, and not as the whole, of the Government. And as a part of the Government, I hold it to be frantic to suppose, that from the election of members of Parliament you can altogether exclude, by any contrivance, even if it were desirable to do so, the influence of property, rank, talents, family connection, and whatever else, in the radical language of the day, is considered as intimidation or corruption. I believe, that if a reform, to the extent of that demanded by the radical reformers, were granted, you would, before an annual election came round, find that there were new connections grown up which you must again destroy, new influence acquired which you must dispossess of its authority; and that in these fruitless attempts at unattainable purity, you were working against the natural current of human nature.

I believe, therefore, that, contrive how you will, some such human motives of action will find room to operate in the election of members of Parliament. I think that this must and ought to be so, unless you mean to exclude from

the concerns of the nation all inert wealth, all inactive talent, the retired, the aged, and the infirm, all who cannot face popular assemblies or engage in busy life; in short, unless you have found some expedient for disarming property of influence, without (what I hope we are not yet ripe for) the abolition of property itself.

I would have by choice—if the choice were yet to be made—I would have in the House of Commons great variety of interests, and I would have them find their way there by a great variety of rights of election; satisfied that uniformity of election would produce any thing but a just representation of various interests. As to the close boroughs, I know that through them have found their way into the House of Commons, men whose talents have been an honour to their kind, and whose names are interwoven with the brightest periods in the history of their country. I cannot think that system altogether vicious which has produced such fruits. Nor can I think that there should be but one road into that assembly, or that no man should be presumed fit for the deliberations of a senate, who has not had the nerves previously to face the storms of the hustings.

I need not say, Gentlemen, that I am one of the last men to disparage the utility and dignity of popular elections. I have good cause to speak of them in far different language. But, among numberless other considerations which endear to me the favours which I have received at your hands, I confess it is one, that, as your representative, I am enabled to speak my genuine sentiments on this (as I think it) vital question of parliamentary reform, without the imputation of shrinking from popular canvass, or of seeking shelter for myself in that species of representation which, as an element in the composition of Parliament, I never shall cease to defend.

In truth, Gentlemen, though the question of reform is

made the pretext of those persons who have vexed the country for some months, I verily believe, that there are very few even of them who either give credit to their own exaggerations, or care much about the improvements which they recommend. Why, do we not see that the most violent of the reformers of the day are aiming at seats in that assembly, which, according to their own theories, they should have left to wallow in its own pollution, discountenanced and unredeemed? It is true, that if they found their way there, they might endeavour to bring us to a sense of our misdeeds, and to urge us to redeem our character by some self-condemning ordinance; but would not the authority of their names, as our associates, have more than counterbalanced the force of their eloquence as our reformers?

But, Gentlemen, I am for the whole Constitution. The liberty of the subject as much depends on the maintenance of the constitutional prerogatives of the Crown—on the acknowledgment of the legitimate power of the other House of Parliament, as it does in upholding that supreme power (for such is the power of the purse, in one sense of the word, though not in the sense of the resolution of 1648) which resides in the democratical branch of the Constitution. Whatever beyond its just proportion was gained by one part, would be gained at the expense of the whole; and the balance is now, perhaps, as nearly poised as human wisdom can adjust it. I fear to touch that balance, the disturbance of which must bring confusion on the nation.

Gentlemen, I trust there are few, very few, reasonable and enlightened men ready to lend themselves to projects of confusion. But I confess I very much wish, that all who are not ready to do so would consider the ill effect of any countenance given, publicly or by apparent implication,

to those whom, in their hearts and judgments, they despise. I remember that most excellent and able man, Mr. Wilberforce, once saying, in the House of Commons, that he "never believed an opposition really to wish mischief to the country; that they only wished just so much mischief as might drive their opponents out, and place themselves in their room." Now, Gentlemen, I cannot help thinking that there are some persons tampering with the question of reform something in the same spirit. They do not go so far as the reformers; they even state irreconcilable differences of opinion; but to a certain extent they agree, and even co-operate with them. They co-operate with them in inflaming the public feeling not only against the Government, but against the support given by Parliament to that Government, in the hope, no doubt, of attracting to themselves the popularity which is lost to their opponents, and thus being enabled to correct and retrieve the errors of a displaced administration. Vain and hopeless task to raise such a spirit and then to govern it! They may stimulate the steeds into fury, till the chariot is hurried to the brink of a precipice; but do they flatter themselves that they can then leap in, and, hurling the incompetent driver from his seat, check the reins just in time to turn from the precipice and avoid the fall?—I fear they would attempt it in vain. The impulse, once given, may be too impetuous to be controlled; and, intending only to change the guidance of the machine, they may hurry it and themselves to irretrievable destruction.

May every man who has a stake in the country, whether from situation, from character, from wealth, from his family, and from the hopes of his children—may every man who has a sense of the blessings for which he is indebted to the form of Government under which he lives, see that the time is come, at which his decision must be

taken, and, when once taken, steadfastly acted upon—for or against the institutions of the British monarchy! The time is come at which there is but that line of demarcation. On which side of that line we, Gentlemen, shall range ourselves, our choice has long ago been made. In acting upon that our common choice, with my best efforts and exertions, I shall at once faithfully represent your sentiments, and satisfy my own judgment and conscience.

SPEECH

AT THE PUBLIC DINNER AT LIVERPOOL, IN THE LYCEUM ROOM, ON FRIDAY, THE 30TH OF AUGUST, 1822.

GENTLEMEN,

Often as I have had occasion to express my thanks to my constituents, I never rose under feelings so oppressive as those which I experience at the present moment. It is not that the manifestation of your kindness is new or strange, for it began with your first unsolicited selection of me, and has grown with the growth of our acquaintance; but the more than usual—the crowning kindness of this moment, when I come among you to return thanks for the past, and to terminate our connection for the future, is really overcoming, and almost takes from me the faculty of expressing the excess of acknowledgment which it inspires.

Gentlemen, let those who doubt the practical excellence of the political institutions of Great Britain look at the scene which this assembly exhibits; and when they see how far an humble individual, without personal distinction, or personal claims of any kind on the consideration or goodwill of a great community, can earn their good opinion,

and, I may venture to say, their affection, simply by the performance of his public duty as their representative, let them consider what guarantees there must be for the security of a country in which such connections are formed, and for a constitution under which such a public interchange of reciprocal esteem and reciprocal obligations is maintained. Never can such a country sink under the vainly apprehended danger of despotism; never, I trust, can such a constitution be made the victim of that opposite and equally formidable danger—of anarchy, which would involve not only the ruin of all that is venerable in our establishments, but the extinction of all that is estimable in social life.

Gentlemen, there are, indeed, other roads to power and to popularity. Power may, perhaps, be gained, and its continued tenure secured, by a subserviency without limit or hesitation: and there is a cheap, but dazzling, popularity for those who will either invent a catalogue of imaginary evils, or, attributing to man the acts of Providence, will promise instant relief to sufferings arising out of inevitable necessity, and to calamities which endurance only can cure; who will challenge all existing institutions as misgovernment, and mount and ride in the whirlwind of reform. But, gentlemen, neither of these courses have I ever thought it consistent with honour or with duty to pursue. He may, perhaps, be held a timid and unwise politician, who will not unscrupulously lend himself to objects which he cannot approve; and he may be sometimes an unpopular representative, who does not lay the foundation of his popularity in flattery of the passions of the people. For the people are open to flattery as well as kings; and that language is not more remote from truth which exalts prerogative beyond the bounds of reason, than that which speaks incessantly of popular rights, with-

out reference to corresponding duties. But, gentlemen, no such sacrifices of truth have been necessary to obtain and to retain your good-will. I have found in this enlightened community,—comprehending, as it necessarily does, conflicting opinions, as well as, in a certain degree, conflicting interests — I have found a singular temperance in your differences of political opinion. I have found generally prevalent among you a warm but reasoning loyalty, consistent with perfect independence of thought; and an ardent love of liberty, combined with a determined hostility to all the excesses of faction. It is in sympathizing with these your feelings, and participating in these your sentiments, that I have acquired the share which I have the happiness to hold in your good opinion; though sure I am, that, with all my endeavours to earn it, I cannot have succeeded in deserving that excess of it which you have been pleased to manifest to me on this occasion.

Gentlemen, on former occasions, when I have had the honour to address meetings like the present, the task has been much more easy. The topics on which I then had to dilate belonged to the feelings of the moment. We have, on those occasions, had great struggles to animate us, we have had great victories to celebrate; and we all know, that, in the celebration of these municipal victories, some exaggeration of triumph is not only permitted, but is freely and frankly allowed by one party to the other. But on the present occasion, warmly as I feel all that my immediate friends and supporters have done for me and expressed towards me, I stand peculiarly circumstanced; a peculiarity glorious, I think, to the town as well as to myself; — I stand in the peculiar circumstances of not knowing that I have among you, at this moment, even a political enemy. I have received, gentlemen, in the course of this day—pardon the

boast, for the cause of it lies, as it well may, very near to my breast—I have received this morning, from the associated commercial bodies of the town, an address, acknowledging, in terms far beyond the merit of any services which I have laboured to perform, my conduct as representative of Liverpool. Among the signatures to that address, representing, as those signatures do, all the various classes into which this extensive commercial community is divided—among these signatures, I say, every second name is the name of some individual who has taken an active part against me in some, if not in every election. That I have deserved this unexampled concurrence of approbation, I do not pretend; that I have received it, will be, to the latest hour of my life, a pride beyond what I should be warranted in expressing here; and a pride, gentlemen, which I shall transmit to my children.

Such a testimony as this disables me from referring, with any thing like an adverse feeling, to those whose political opinions we have combated, heretofore, with licensed animosity—an animosity, however, which never survived the contest which gave birth to it. While I maintain, unshaken, my own political opinions, and while I feel myself called upon to render to you, this day, an account of those opinions, I beg to be understood as saying nothing in hostility to any man who may differ from me, or who may have opposed me.

Gentlemen, it so happens that I can render this account with the greater impartiality, because, in addition to those general subjects upon which, retrospectively, we are all now tolerably well agreed—to the war in which the country was engaged when I first came amongst you, and of which, while the success was doubtful, the policy was naturally enough disputed, but with respect to which all memory of difference has been since nearly extinguished in acclama-

tions at its final triumph; in addition, I say, to that great question, and to the questions which grew out of it, there were, when I came amongst you, and there are still, two great national questions, upon one of which I have the misfortune to differ from the great body of my most respectable friends and supporters in this town, almost as widely as, on the other, I differ with their adversaries: I allude, gentlemen, to the Catholic question as the first, and to the question of parliamentary reform as the second, of those national questions.

Gentlemen, on the first of these questions, you are well aware of my opinions; for, on one of the earliest occasions on which I had the honour to address the inhabitants of Liverpool, I told them fairly, that, in accepting my services, they accepted the services of one who, on that question, had taken his part; and who could not, in deference to their opinions or prejudices, call them which you will, abate a jot of his anxiety for its success. Accordingly, gentlemen, at the different periods and under the various modifications under which that question has come to be discussed, I have given it my most strenuous support. But I have, in all such cases, dealt honestly by you, gentlemen; for I have rarely, if ever, given my support to that measure in the House of Commons, without openly acknowledging, that, in so doing, I spoke against what I believed to be the prevailing sense of my constituents. I have not, therefore, misused the weight of your authority, nor compromised any opinion of yours adverse to my own.

Gentlemen, if I were remaining in this country, and continuing to take my part in Parliament, I should continue to walk in the same direction; but I think (and, as I may not elsewhere have an opportunity of expressing this opinion, I am desirous of expressing it here)—I think that, after the experience of a fruitless struggle of more

than ten years, I should, as an individual (speaking for none but myself, and not knowing whether I carry any other person's opinion with me), be induced, from henceforth, or, perhaps, after one more general trial, to seek upon that question a liberal compromise, rather than persevere in fighting, perhaps ten years more, in vain for unqualified concession.

I might have had some hesitation, under other circumstances, in making this avowal, knowing that it is generally an easier, as well as a prouder, course to persevere, even in what is hopeless, than fairly to avow a disposition to compromise. But, in what I say on this occasion, I can have no other object than to declare a sincere opinion. I alluded, in recent debates, in the House of Commons, to the policy of accepting partial concessions, and to my regret that I had once been myself a party to the refusal of them. I have since revolved the subject much in my mind: and I confess, that, next to the immediate success of the whole measure, which I have as much as ever at heart, I should wish, as well for the benefit of those most immediately concerned, as for the general peace of the kingdom, to see such an arrangement as should remove all practical cause of complaint on the one side, without inciting vague and indefinite apprehensions on the other; referring to a more favourable opportunity, and to the progress of public opinion, that complete and final settlement, of which I shall never cease to maintain the expediency as well as the justice.

I turn now, Gentlemen, to the second question, with which, as much as with the former, my name has been connected in popular observation, and often in popular obloquy. I am mistaken, Gentlemen,—I mean, I am misrepresented, my purpose is mistaken, if it is supposed that I impute to those who support the question of parliamentary

reform a distinct apprehension of the consequences to which, I think, their doctrines lead, and a design to promote those consequences. It is with their doctrines that I quarrel, and not with their motives; and it has been my desire always to discuss the question argumentatively rather than angrily, with those who are opposed to me in opinion. I wish them to state to me—to me? I wish them to state to themselves, distinctly, the object which they have in view, and the means they think they have to attain it. Why, Gentlemen, what are the general arguments by which we are urged to admit a change in the constitution of the House of Commons? These arguments are derived from expensive wars, from heavy taxes, and from severe enactments, constituting, as is affirmed, so many outrageous inroads upon the Constitution. Granted, for argument's sake, that all these charges are true. Granted that all the proceedings of Parliament, for many years past, have been reprehensible. But were they the proceedings of the House of Commons alone? Does the British Constitution act by a single organ? Has there been no concurrence in the maintenance of those wars, no consent to the imposition of those taxes, no co-operation in the passing of those enactments? Is there no other assembly in existence which partook of the opinions on which the House of Commons has proceeded, and which would make, therefore, the reform of the House of Commons nugatory for the professed purposes, unless the co-ordinate authority was also reformed? If you reform the House of Commons, on the grounds of past misconduct, what will you do with the House of Lords? If the House of Commons is to be reformed, because it sanctioned the war with America; if it is to be reformed, because it maintained the war with France—(sinking, for a moment, the undoubted fact, that the war

with America was a favourite measure with the people of this country as much as with the Government; sinking, for a moment, the undoubted fact, that the war with France was emphatically the war of the nation);—if the House of Commons, I ask, is to be reformed, because it approved and supported those wars; if it is to be reformed, because it passed laws for the suppression of internal disturbance, is the House of Lords to go free, which consented to those wars, and of those acts consented to all, while some of them, and those not the least severe, it originated? If no such reform is to be applied to the House of Lords, what is the supposed effect upon that House of a reform of the House of Commons? Let us fairly speak out:—Is the unreformed House of Lords to continue in full vigour, to counteract the will of the reformed House of Commons? Where, then, is the use of the reform? Or, is the reformed House of Commons to act upon the House of Lords by intimidation and compulsion? Aye!—That, to be sure, is what must be meant, if there be truth in the argument; but that is what no man will say.

My quarrel, then, with this course of argument is—not that it aims at an alteration—at an improvement, if you please, in the House of Commons; but—that it aims at quite another thing than a House of Commons as part of a legislature. The legislative authority of the state, according to the Constitution as it stands, is shared between two houses of Parliament;—the suggested reform goes to provide a single instrument, which shall not only do its own work, but inevitably controul the working of the other; which, if the object of the reform is obtained, must act so powerfully, that it must, in the very nature of things, reject any co-ordinate power, and speedily act alone.

I have never stated it as a beauty of the Constitution,

that Old Sarum should have but as many voters as representatives. Let it have two thousand, with all my heart. I have never stated it as a beauty and perfection of the Constitution, that this or that great peer should be able to return persons of his choice as the representatives of the people in Parliament. I have never said, that detected corruption should not be punished. In God's name, disfranchise other corrupt boroughs as you disfranchised Grampound. But I have said, and I repeat, that I see no way of counteracting the influence of property, and that I can imagine no process of amputation of close boroughs—on the ground, not of practical punishment, but of speculative improvement, and on the principle that the House of Commons ought to speak the direct sense of the people—which does not lead, by inevitable inference, to a total alteration of the functions of the House of Commons. If by "people" is meant the nation (and it is in the equivocal use of this word that much of the fallacy of the argument lies);—if an assembly, "representing the people," is meant to be the undoubted, exclusive organ of national will—I ask, when the nation has once such an organ, what room is there for another legislative establishment? How can a second exist, and what is it to do?

Gentlemen, on a recent occasion, in a neighbouring county, a most respectable gentleman, respectable from family, respectable from private character and from talents, has done me the honour to refer to my opinions with some expressions of surprise. Mr. Fawkes (I name him with due honour, for what I believe to be his individual worth) expressed great surprise, that I, being the representative of the second commercial town in this great kingdom, should feel any anxiety for the fate of the close parts of the representation. Surprise for surprise. For I may, in my turn, be surprised, that a gentleman of Yorkshire, in which county the clamour for

reform began, some years ago, on the ground of the inadequacy of its own particular representation, should seize the present moment, when that representation has just been doubled by Parliament, for agitating anew the question of parliamentary reform. I know no grievance, in the present constitution of Parliament, which has been so constantly dinned into my ears, from my very youth, as the destitute state of Yorkshire in being allowed to send only two of her sons to Parliament. She has been long, "like Niobe, all tears" on this account: but now the grievance is remedied; and, at the very moment when this is done, one of the most gifted of the sons of this unhappy matron comes forward, and, instead of returning thanks in behalf of his parent county, expatiates loudly, in her name, on the inadequate representation of England! A Yorkshireman might have been too well pleased with the recent attention to her long-neglected claims to be in a humour to find fault with Parliament just at this moment. But, Gentlemen, why am I, more than Mr. Fawkes, to confine my attention to my own particular share of the representation? So far from my situation, as representative of the second town in the empire, stifling my voice on this subject, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying, that if I were member for Old Sarum, I should, more probably, hold my tongue upon it. It is because I am member for Liverpool; because I can have no shadow of personal interest in maintaining that more imperfect species of representation, which I do, nevertheless, conscientiously maintain;—it is because my opinion cannot be questioned, as influenced by motives of individual convenience, that I feel a confidence, which I otherwise might not feel, in exposing what I think the fallacy of those doctrines which push the principle of direct personal representation to an extent such as, if adopted, must change the Constitution.

Let any man say, that his views of reform go no farther than to the removal of blots, and I am with him. But it is because the arguments for reform tend much further;—it is because they tend not to remedy, but to destroy; not to correct what may be amiss in a system of representation which combines all species of property, admits all species of industry, opens the door to all species of talent;—it is because they appear to me to tend to a system to be founded exclusively on what is called the power of the people; a power which, if recognised in the sense in which they proclaim it, must act, not in concert with other powers, not by a conflict and compromise of different interests; but by its own uncontrolled authority, supreme and alone;—it is for this reason that I think it right to oppose, *in limine*, projects of parliamentary reform.

Gentlemen, it is said, however, that, besides the faulty composition of the House of Commons, there is an influence of the Crown which perverts and paralyzes all its functions. My first answer to this proposition is the same which I have made to the proposition for alteration in the House of Commons. How rarely does the House of Lords differ from the other house in its decisions!—How much more rarely does it differ in a more popular sense! Is it the influence of the Crown which predominates in the House of Lords too? If it is—do you mean to leave the House of Lords still subject to the same influence, and still with an equal voice in the decision of every national question? If not—is not the project still, though upon another pretext, to erect an instrument which will make the operation of the House of Lords completely nugatory; to place in a new, an untried organ, the whole practical energy of the Constitution?

I do verily and sincerely believe, that there is no proposition more false, than that the influence of the Crown,

any more than its direct power, has increased comparatively with the increasing strength, wealth, and population of the country. To these, if the Crown be good for any thing at all in the Constitution, it is necessary that its power and influence should bear some reasonable proportion. I deny that, in the House of Commons—I deny that, in the House of Lords, such an increase can be shown; but further I contend, that, in speculating upon the practical play of our Constitution, we narrow our view of its efficient principles, of its progress, and of the state in which it now stands, if we do not take into account other powers, extrinsic to the two Houses of Parliament, which are at work in the moral and political world, and which require to be balanced and counterpoised in their operation.

What should we think of that philosopher, who, in writing, at the present day, a treatise upon naval architecture and the theory of navigation, should omit wholly from his calculation that new and mighty power—new, at least, in the application of its might—which walks the water, like a giant rejoicing in his course;—stemming alike the tempest and the tide;—accelerating intercourse, shortening distances;—creating, as it were, unexpected neighbourhoods, and new combinations of social and commercial relation;—and giving to the fickleness of winds and the faithlessness of waves the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land? Such a writer, though he might describe a ship correctly, though he might show from what quarters the winds of heaven blow, would be surely an incurious and an idle spectator of the progress of nautical science, who did not see in the power of STEAM a corrective of all former calculations. So, in political science, he who, speculating on the British Constitution, should content himself with marking the distribution of acknowledged technical powers between the House of

Lords, the House of Commons, and the Crown, and assigning to each their separate provinces—to the Lords their legislative authority—to the Crown its *veto* (how often used?)—to the House of Commons its power of stopping supplies (how often, in fact, necessary to be resorted to?) —and should think that he had thus described the British Constitution as it acts and as it is influenced in its action; but should omit from his enumeration that mighty power of public opinion, embodied in a free press, which pervades, and checks, and, perhaps, in the last resort, nearly governs the whole;—such a man would, surely, give but an imperfect view of the Government of England as it is now modified, and would greatly underrate the counteracting influences against which that of the executive power has to contend.

Gentlemen, there is one plain test, which I think it wholesome to apply to all speculative projects of political improvement. I consider, first, not how they might operate for the general benefit of mankind:—that is a wide consideration, indeed, and fit to be deeply studied at leisure; but is not, as it appears to me, the immediate business of the British statesman, providing for British interests: and, I confess, that as, in private life, I generally look with caution on that diffusive benevolence which neglects the circle immediately around it; so I look with some little suspicion to that spirit of general improvement which is ready to sacrifice, to a general principle, the immediate and particular safety of one's own country. I inquire, rather, how such projects are likely to operate on the British Constitution; which I find to be a monarchy—a monarchy qualified, indeed, with establishments, which limit, which restrain, which controul it—but, fundamentally and essentially, a monarchy. I do not think myself bound to enter the lists to show why the British Consti-

tution *should be* a monarchy. I am not called upon to demonstrate, *à priori*, that it was necessary that the British Constitution should be a monarchy, any more than that Great Britain should be an island. It is quite sufficient for me that I find these things so; it is quite sufficient for me to know that Providence has ordained the one, and that the acts of our ancestors, from immemorial time, acquiesced in and confirmed by a long succession of generations, have clearly ascertained the other; and have thus, although without my individual vote or consent, imposed upon me the duty of allegiance to the monarchy under which I have been born.

I know how tame, and servile, and abject this sort of reasoning sounds, in an age when it is so much more the fashion to appeal to theory than to fact; to try every existing establishment by some abstract model of excellence. But, Gentlemen, against a popular assembly, constituted on the principles on which parliamentary reform is alleged to be necessary (the effective consequence of which principles does, I willingly admit, go beyond either the avowal, or, I dare say, the intention of those who profess them)—I say, against a popular assembly, so constituted, no monarchy could stand. Such a government must be, practically, whatever it be in name, a republic. I do not think myself at liberty to discuss the question, whether that be a better kind of Government. I feel myself, I confess, circumscribed within the limits of the existing Constitution.

"Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna."

Improve, as you can, the constitution which has fallen to your lot. The attempt to alter by force that Constitution, is one which the law has branded in disagreeable terms.

I agree with the law, and would endeavour to prevent that from being done through inadvertence, which, undoubtedly, there is no danger of any one's attempting to do by design. In short, in all improvements we must conform to the nature of the country to which we belong. Like the King of Bohemia, who had an extreme desire to be a naval power, but whose laudable ambition was checked by this only impediment, that there was no sea-port in his kingdom.

So much, gentlemen, as to the principles of Parliamentary reform; and as to the principles of my resistance to it, as a general proposition. Let me now call your attention, for a short time, to the practical uses to which Parliamentary reform is by its advocates proposed to be applied. Five or six years ago there was great suffering among the labouring classes. Provisions were at such a price, as to be almost unattainable by the poorest order of the people. The grievance in which these sufferings originated, was alleged to be the corn bill. The corn bill was passed by the influence of the landholders. The remedy was in some change which would put that influence down; and we all remember what a clamour was then raised for Parliamentary reform. Well!—times come round; there is now such a plenty, such a glut of provisions, that the humblest classes of society are enjoying comparative affluence. In the manufacturing districts, there is constant and steady employment; at wages somewhat reduced, it is true, but sufficient, in general, for comfortable maintenance. And these blessings are further felt in a reduction of the poor-rates, and, God be thanked, in a remarkable diminution of crime. I do not know, gentlemen, whether all these particulars constitute a flourishing state of the community; but I do know, that the absence of them was considered as constituting a state of things too bad to bear; and I cannot but think, that whatever partial evils accompany these bless-

ings, those who, five or six years ago, thought the Parliament good for nought, because the landholders had passed a corn bill, and because the poor-rates were augmented, and because the calendars were swelled with crime, must now consent to sympathise with prosperity which grows out of the reverse of the evils of which they complained. But, gentlemen, while the labouring classes of the people are in this state of enjoyment, while work is plenty, while the poor-rates and crimes are diminishing, the growers of corn are suffering. And what is the remedy? Parliamentary reform! So that, in the year 1817, when you suffered under high prices, Parliamentary reform was the cure for that calamity; and now, when the landholders are suffering under cheapness, Parliamentary reform is necessary the other way! And for what purpose? To restore, I suppose, the good old times of 1817. Let me not be understood as underrating the pressure of either of these evils; in both states of things there is much to lament, and in that which now exists there is much which I wish to God I could see the way to cure. But as to Parliamentary reform, as the remedy for either—much more as the remedy for both—I will ask any man, whether there is common sense in such a proposition—whether the double clamour for it be not a presumption rather in favour of the impartiality with which Parliament has acted in both these painful extremes?

But parliamentary reform is the panacea for every evil. I read, a few days ago, (I cannot immediately recollect where,) a story of an artist who had attained great eminence in painting, but who had directed his art chiefly to one favourite object. That object happened to be a *red lion*. His first employment was at a public-house, where the landlord allowed him to follow his fancy. Of course the artist recommended a *red lion*. A gentleman in the

neighbourhood, having a new dining-room to ornament, applied to the artist for his assistance; and, in order that he might have full scope for his talents, left to him the choice of a subject for the principal compartment of the room. The painter took due time to deliberate; and then, with the utmost gravity and earnestness—"Don't you think," said he to his employer, "that a handsome *red lion* would have a fine effect in this situation?" The gentleman was not entirely convinced, perhaps; however, he let the painter have his way in this instance; determined, nevertheless, that in his library, to which he next conducted the artist, he would have something of more exquisite device and ornament. He showed him a small panel over his chimney-piece. "Here," says he, "I must have something striking. The space, you see, is but small, the workmanship must be proportionably delicate." "What think you," says the painter, after appearing to dive deep into his imagination for the suggestion, "what think you of a *small red lion?*" Just so it is with parliamentary reform. Whatever may be the evil, the remedy is a parliamentary reform; and the utmost variety that you can extort from those who call themselves "moderate reformers" is, that they will be contented with a *small* red lion!

Gentlemen, I wish that these theories were only entertaining; but they have mischief in them; and I wish that against them the country should be on its guard. I confess I am against even the *smallest* of these *red lions;* I object not to the size, but to the species. I fear the smallest would be but the precursor of the whole menagerie; and that, if once, propitiated by his smallness, you open the door for his admission, you would find, when you wanted him to turn out again, that he had been pampered to a formidable size in his cage.

Gentlemen, in the times in which we live, there is (disguise it how we may) a struggle going on,—in some countries an open, and in some a tacit struggle, between the principles of monarchy and democracy. God be praised, that in that struggle we have not any part to take. God be praised, that we have long ago arrived at all the blessings that are to be derived from that which alone can end such a struggle beneficially,—a compromise and intermixture of those conflicting principles. It is not, as it appears to me, the duty of this country to side either with the assailants, where they aim at too much, nor with those who stand on the defensive, when they will grant nothing. England has only to maintain herself on the basis of her own solid and settled Constitution, firm, unshaken,—a spectatress interested in the contest only by her sympathies;—not a partisan on either side, but, for the sake of both, a model, and ultimately, perhaps, an umpire. Should we be led, by any false impulse of chivalrous benevolence, to participate in the struggle itself, we commit, and thereby impair, our authority; we abandon the position in which we might hereafter do most good, and may bring the danger of a foreign struggle home to our own hearths and to our own institutions.

Gentlemen, with an audience less enlightened than that which I have had the honour to address, I should have avoided topics of such general interest, and confined myself to the particulars of our local connection. But, gentlemen, our connection is one of principle; it had its foundation in principle; on that it has been raised and cemented. Gentlemen, whatever may be my future destination, it will be a comfort unspeakable to me to have laid, in that connection, the foundation, I trust, of mutual and lasting regard; which has cheered every stage of our intercourse, and will long survive our separation.

Gentlemen, it may, perhaps, be expected of me, especially after the speech of my worthy friend, your president, that I should say a few words to you on the topics to which he has alluded. I have doubted much and long whether I should refer to those topics at all, or should persevere in the silence which I have hitherto prescribed to myself upon them; whether I should incur the risk, on the one hand, of being supposed not to have dealt openly with you; or, on the other hand, the risk of that misconstruction, of various sorts, to which a public man, who speaks of himself, must expect to be exposed. On full reflection, I have determined to brave the latter danger rather than the former. I prefer submitting to any misconstruction, to any inconvenience, rather than that it should ever be thought that I had repaid your unbounded confidence with any thing like concealment or distrust. Gentlemen, after this preface, you, will, perhaps, be, in one sense, disappointed to hear, that all that I have to say is, that, upon my honour, I have nothing to tell. But it is as necessary for me to make that confession, as it would have been to make a communication, had I any to make. I do assure you, that I know as little as any man that now listens to me, of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things. I cannot pretend ignorance, indeed, of rumours which are in every one's mouth; but I assure you, upon my honour, that, at the moment at which I am speaking to you, I have nothing either to tell or to conceal.

Gentlemen, you will not expect that I shall enter into any explanation as to what might be the decision which I might think it right to take upon any such occurrence as these rumours have in contemplation. This only, Gentlemen, I can frankly declare to you, that, in any such case, my decision would be founded upon an honest and impartial view of public considerations alone, and that it would

be determined, not by a calculation of interests, but by a balance and comparison of duties.

Enough, gentlemen, on a topic to which I doubt whether I should, even now, have alluded, but for the most unexpected, although amicable provocation of my worthy friend in the chair; and I have only now to hope, that having been, as I learn, misconstrued on account of my silence in another place, I shall not be misconstrued in an opposite direction on account of what I have said here. From my silence then, it has been inferred, that I intended ostentatiously to declare a determination to refuse office at home, if it should be proposed to me. I beg I may not be misconstrued now in an opposite sense, as intending to express, or as feeling, in the slightest degree, any anxiety, any expectation or desire for such a proposal. My only anxiety, I most solemnly declare, is to state the truth to those who have a right to know it, inasmuch as their kindness and attachment to me give them an interest in whatever concerns me.

Gentlemen, wherever my lot may be cast, may this great community continue to flourish in the prosperity now happily beginning to be restored to it, after the fluctuations of war and peace;—in the principles from which it has never swerved, since I have had the honour to be acquainted with it;—in the honourable and liberal spirit which pervades all classes of its society, and which marks even its political divisions;—and in that cordial union which binds all its members together, without distinction of party, in any thing which relates to the interest of your town, or to the benefit of the humbler part of its population. May it flourish an image of splendid commercial greatness, unalloyed by the besetting vices which sometimes grow to such greatness; an image of those princely merchants whose history one of your own body has illustrated;

mixing, like them, with the pursuits of trade, the cultivation of liberal science; decorating your town with the works of art, as much as it is enriched by enterprise and industry; and placing it, by the variety of its useful, and the munificence of its charitable establishments, among the most celebrated of the cities of the world. May you flourish in the happiness and renown to which these qualities entitle you; and, when you look for another individual to occupy the station which I have, for ten years, filled, may you find one more competent to the task than I have been:—one more devoted to your interests, more anxious for your prosperity, or more thankful for your kindness, I am sure you cannot find.

SPEECH

AT A PUBLIC DINNER IN THE TOWN-HALL IN 1823, ON THE OCCASION OF PROPOSING THE HEALTH OF MR. HUGHES, THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AMERICA, AT THE COURT OF SWEDEN.

Mr. Canning said, that, with the kind permission of the chair, he rose to propose a toast which, he felt confident, would be received by the company with the most sincere and cordial satisfaction. He alluded to the health of the distinguished stranger then near him, who was on his way to Sweden, as the representative of his country, the United States of America. He was most happy to avail himself of this opportunity, amidst so large an assemblage of some of the first merchants of England, of

congratulating that gentleman on the full and uninterrupted intercourse which now existed between his country and our own: an intercourse, of which the value could be nowhere so well understood as in this great town, which was, both in point of local situation and of spirit and enterprize, so pre-eminently qualified to derive from that intercourse every possible advantage. On such an occasion he might be permitted to express the gratification which he felt, in common with the great mass of the intelligent and liberal men of both countries, to see the animosities necessarily attendant on a state of hostility so rapidly wearing away, and giving place to feelings so much more consonant to the true interests of two nations united by a common language, a common spirit of commercial enterprize, and a common regard for well-regulated liberty. It appeared to him, that of two such states the relative position was not wholly unlike that which occasionally occurred in families; where a child having, perhaps, displeased a parent—a daughter, for instance, in contracting a connection offensive to that parent's feelings, some estrangement would for a while necessarily ensue; but, after a lapse of time, the irritation is forgotten, the force of blood again prevails, and the daughter and the mother stand together against the world. That all causes of dissension may have now ceased for ever between two countries so strongly bound to each other, and with so clear a community of interests, he most sincerely hoped; and he trusted, that, in whatever part of the world Mr. Hughes might represent his country, he would feel, that in no part of it could that country's merits be more truly appreciated than in this.

SPEECH

ON THE 16TH OF APRIL, 1816, AT A DINNER GIVEN TO MR. CANNING BY THE BRITISH MERCHANTS RESIDENT AT LISBON.

I AM deeply sensible, gentlemen, of the honour done me by this meeting, and I am highly flattered by the sentiments with which you have been pleased to couple my name.

To have been a disciple of Mr. Pitt, and to have been a sharer in those councils, in which originated the struggle for the salvation of Portugal, are the two circumstances in my political life, on which, if on any, I look back with pride and gratification.

It is a pride to me to have imbibed the principles of Mr. Pitt, and a gratification to receive your testimony of the just application of those principles to the measures by which this country was saved; principles of which the characteristic was to cherish order and industry at home, as the true sources of commercial opulence and national strength abroad; to consider the peace, and power, and safety of Great Britain, as bound up with the security and independence of other nations. From this system of internal and external policy, Great Britain derived the means, and imposed upon herself the duty, of sustaining the long contest with France, which preceded the war of the Peninsula.

In pursuance of that policy, those who had the direction of the British councils, at the moment when the grasping hand of France was extended to seize the crown and liberties of Portugal, did not hesitate to fly to her assistance.

The good sense, the feeling, and the generosity of the British nation, went with their government in the undertaking. But sanguine and visionary enthusiasts, I well remember, were they deemed to be, who thought that from the struggle for Portugal, might issue the deliverance of Europe. Such an enthusiast I was, and always avowed myself to be.

I made this avowal, even in times when the contest was most doubtful, and by many held to be desperate.

True it was, that clouds and darkness occasionally gathered on the horizon: but even through those clouds and through that darkness, I saw, or fondly fancied I saw, a ray of light which promised to pierce the gloom, and which might hereafter lighten the nations.

It is not at this time of day, nor in this spot that I am called upon to justify these hopes against the imputation of extravagance.

Whether as a just and natural consequence of perseverance in a good cause, or whether by the special favour of Providence, true it is, in fact, that from this nook of Europe proceeded the impulse by which its mightiest kingdoms have been set free. True it is, that in this sterile and unpromising soil was deposited the seed of that security, whose branches now overshadow mankind.

From these recollections and associations, the land in which we are assembled, derives an animating and classic interest, even in the eyes of the most indifferent observer.

For my own part, I cannot view this city, in which for so many months of horror and anxiety, amidst a condensed and suffering, but unmurmuring population, the hopes of Europe lay trembling for their doom;—I could not traverse those mighty fastnesses of nature, which fence this capital, those bulwarks, behind which Victory herself retired, to new-plume her wings for a flight more soaring and more

sustained;—I could not contemplate those holy ruins, amongst which I have lately been wandering, where an awful curiosity pauses to inquire, whether the surrounding destruction has been wrought by ancient convulsions of nature, or by the sportive sacrilege and barbarous malignity of the foe?—I cannot behold the traces of desolation in this country, and of suffering among the people, without rendering a just homage to the character of a nation, which by all that it has done, and still more by all that it has endured, has raised itself to a pitch of moral eminence, so far beyond the proportion of its territory, population, or power.

I cannot consider all these things without blessing that wise and beneficent policy, which brought England with timely speed, to the aid of such a nation; to call forth its energies, to marshal its resources, to support and invigorate its unyielding constancy, and after its own deliverance was achieved, to lead it forth in pursuit of its oppressor.

To have fought together in such a cause, to have mingled banners, and to have mingled blood in battles for such interests, and leading to such results, must, undoubtedly, cement an eternal union between the British and Portuguese nations.

You will observe, gentlemen, that I am anxious to state the principle of our connection, and of our claims upon each other, in terms not of comparison, but of equality.

I do so with sincerity, because I believe that statement to be just; I might do so from policy, even if I doubted of its justness. Portugal would not have been saved without England, it is true: but Portugal was to England a main instrument for the mightier task which England had to perform.

We brought hither councils and arms, and British discipline, and British valour; we found here willing hearts and

active hands, a confiding Government, a people brave and enduring, docile in instruction, faithful in following, patient under privations, not to be subdued by disaster, and not to be intoxicated by success.

The arm of England was the lever that wrenched the power of Buonaparte from its basis—Portugal was the *fulcrum* on which that lever moved—England fanned and fed the sacred fire, but Portugal had already reared the altar on which that fire was kindled, and from which it mounted, brightening and widening, until the world was illumined with its blaze.

I have said, that even from motives of policy, I would state as nearly equal as possible, the balance between Portugal and England. There is a principle of disunion in unequal connections. Active beneficence is a virtue of easier practice than forbearance after having conferred, or than thankfulness after having received, a benefit.

I know not, indeed, whether it be a greater and more difficult exercise of magnanimity for the one party, to act as if he had forgotten, or for the other, as if he constantly remembered the obligation.

On the part of Great Britain, let us bear in mind that the feelings to which we addressed ourselves in Portugal, were those of national pride and independence. If those feelings were found equal to the occasion, what wonder, or what regret that they should have survived it? It is naturally to be expected that, having accomplished the overthrow of its enemies, the genius of the nation should carry itself with somewhat of a bolder and freer port, even towards its friends. We have no right to feel this sorely. It would be neither just nor becoming in us to do so. We should respect, even in its excess, an independence which we have vindicated, and should pardon even the waywardness of a spirit which we have raised.

To Portugal, on the other hand, I would say, that there is no humiliation in the sentiment of national gratitude;—that a grateful mind is at once indebted and discharged, and recovers its level by a just acknowledgment that there is no room for either commercial or political jealousy between Great Britain and Portugal;—that the world is large enough both for Portuguese and British Commerce;—and that Great Britain, while she has never been wanting to her ally in time of need, seeks no other reward for all her exertions, and all her sacrifices, than mutual confidence and common prosperity.

I am sure that I shall be rightly understood by all those in whose presence I speak, not only as to my meaning, but as to my motives.

The delicacy and difficulty of the situation in which the local Government of this kingdom is placed; the weight of their responsibility, and the anxiety which (as I have witnessed) necessarily attends it, entitle them to peculiar consideration. I have no fear of their disavowing the assurance which I give you of their friendly disposition towards this meeting, and I venture, therefore, to propose to you, Gentlemen, in the confidence that you will receive it cordially, and that your cordiality will be duly estimated and returned, "The health of their Excellencies the Governors of the Kingdom."

SPEECH

AT PLYMOUTH, IN THE YEAR 1823, UPON THE OCCASION OF BEING PRESENTED WITH THE FREEDOM OF THAT TOWN.

[This speech is, throughout, one of singular excellence; the passage in allusion to the ships at anchor near the town, towards the close of it, perhaps has been seldom equalled—never surpassed—in the peculiar aptness, force, and beauty with which it illustrates the topic of which it treats.]

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

I accept with thankfulness, and with greater satisfaction than I can express, this flattering testimony of your good opinion and goodwill. I must add, that the value of the gift itself has been greatly enhanced by the manner in which your worthy and honourable Recorder has developed the motives which suggested it, and the sentiments which it is intended to convey.

Gentlemen, your Recorder has said very truly, that whoever, in this free and enlightened state, aims at political eminence, and discharges political duties, must expect to have his conduct scrutinized, and every action of his public life sifted with no ordinary jealousy, and with no sparing criticism; and such may have been my lot as much as that of other public men. But, gentlemen, unmerited obloquy seldom fails of an adequate, though perhaps tardy, compensation. I must think myself, as my honourable friend has said, eminently fortunate, if such compensation as he describes, has fallen to me at an earlier period than to many

others; if I dare flatter myself (as his partiality has flattered me), that the sentiments that you are kind enough to entertain for me, are in unison with those of the country; if, in addition to the justice done me by my friends, I may, as he has assured me, rely upon a candid construction, even from political opponents.

But, gentlemen, the secret of such a result does not lie deep. It consists only in an honest and undeviating pursuit of what one conscientiously believes to be one's public duty—a pursuit which, steadily continued, will, however detached and separate parts of a man's conduct may be viewed under the influence of partialities or prejudices, obtain for it, when considered as a whole, the approbation of all honest and honourable minds. Any man may occasionally be mistaken as to the means most conducive to the end which he has in view; but if the end be just and praise-worthy, it is by that he will be ultimately judged, either by his contemporaries or by posterity.

Gentlemen, the end which I confess I have always had in view, and which appears to me the legitimate object of pursuit to a British statesman, I can describe in one word. The language of modern philosophy is wisely and diffusely benevolent; it professes the perfection of our species, and the amelioration of the lot of all mankind. Gentlemen, I hope that my heart beats as high for the general interest of humanity—I hope that I have as friendly a disposition towards other nations of the earth, as any one who vaunts his philanthropy most highly; but I am contented to confess, that in the conduct of political affairs, the grand object of my contemplation is the interest of England.

Not, Gentlemen, that the interest of England is an interest which stands isolated and alone. The situation which she holds forbids an exclusive selfishness; her prosperity must contribute to the prosperity of other nations, and her

stability to the safety of the world. But, intimately connected as we are with the system of Europe, it does not follow that we are therefore called upon to mix ourselves on every occasion, with a restless and meddling activity, in the concerns of the nations which surround us. It is upon a just balance of conflicting duties, and of rival, but sometimes incompatible, advantages, that a government must judge when to put forth its strength, and when to husband it for occasions yet to come.

Our ultimate object must be the peace of the world. That object may sometimes be best attained by prompt exertions—sometimes by abstinence from interposition in contests which we cannot prevent. It is upon these principles that, as has been most truly observed by my worthy friend, it did not appear to the Government of this country to be necessary that Great Britain should mingle in the recent contest between France and Spain.

Your worthy Recorder has accurately classed the persons who would have driven us into that contest. There were undoubtedly among them those who desired to plunge this country into the difficulties of war, partly from the hope that those difficulties would overwhelm the Administration; but it would be most unjust not to admit that there were others who were actuated by nobler principles and more generous feelings, who would have rushed forward at once from the sense of indignation at aggression, and who deemed that no act of injustice could be perpetrated from one end of the universe to the other, but that the sword of Great Britain should leap from its scabbard to avenge it. But as it is the province of law to control the excess even of laudable passions and propensities in individuals, so it is the duty of Government to restrain within due bounds the ebullition of national sentiment, and to regulate the course and direction of impulses which it

cannot blame. Is there any one among the latter class of persons described by my honourable friend (for to the former I have nothing to say), who continues to doubt whether the Government did wisely in declining to obey the precipitate enthusiasm which prevailed at the commencement of the contest in Spain? Is there any body who does not now think, that it was the office of Government to examine more closely all the various bearings of so complicated a question, to consider whether they were called upon to assist a united nation, or to plunge themselves into the internal feuds by which that nation was divided—to aid in repelling a foreign invader, or, to take part in a civil war. Is there any man that does not now see what would have been the extent of burdens that would have been cast upon this country? Is there any one who does not acknowledge that, under such circumstances the enterprise would have been one to be characterized only by a term borrowed from that part of the Spanish literature with which we are most familiar,—Quixotic; an enterprise, romantic in its origin, and thankless in the end?

But while we thus controul even our feelings by our duty, let it not be said that we cultivate peace, either because we fear, or because we are unprepared for, war; on the contrary, if eight months ago the Government did not hesitate to proclaim that the country was prepared for war, if war should be unfortunately necessary, every month of peace that has since passed, has but made us so much the more capable of exertion. The resources created by peace are means of war. In cherishing those resources, we but accumulate those means. *Our present repose is no more a proof of inability to act, than the state of inertness and inactivity in which I have seen those mighty masses that float in the waters above your town, is a proof they are devoid of*

strength, and incapable of being fitted out for action. You well know, gentlemen, how soon one of those stupendous masses, now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness, —how soon, upon any call of patriotism, or of necessity, it would assume the likeness of an animated thing, instinct with life and motion—how soon it would ruffle, as it were, its swelling plumage—how quickly it would put forth all its beauty and its bravery, collect its scattered elements of strength, and awaken its dormant thunder. Such as is one of these magnificent machines when springing from inaction into a display of its might—such is England herself, while apparently passive and motionless she silently concentrates the power to be put forth on an adequate occasion. But God forbid that that occasion should arise. After a war sustained for nearly a quarter of a century—sometimes single-handed, and with all Europe arranged at times against her or at her side, England needs a period of tranquillity, and may enjoy it without fear of misconstruction. Long may we be enabled, gentlemen, to improve the blessings of our present situation, to cultivate the arts of peace, to give to commerce, now reviving, greater extension and new spheres of employment, and to confirm the prosperity now generally diffused throughout this island. Of the blessing of peace, gentlemen, I trust that this borough, with which I have now the honour and happiness of being associated, will receive an ample share. I trust the time is not far distant, when that noble structure of which, as I learn from your Recorder, the box with which you have honoured me, through his hands, formed a part, that gigantic barrier against the fury of the waves that roll into your harbour, will protect a commercial marine not less considerable in its kind, than the warlike marine of which your port has been long so distinguished an asylum, when the town of Plymouth will

participate in the commercial prosperity as largely as it has hitherto done in the naval glories of England.

SPEECH

AT THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, TO SIR JOHN MALCOLM, ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE PRESIDENCY OF BOMBAY, ON THE 13th OF JUNE, 1827.

After the Chairman had proposed the health of the Right Honourable George Canning and His Majesty's Ministers, which he prefaced, by expressing his hope, that their eminent talents, unwearied zeal, and assiduity, would earn for them the highest reward—public gratitude—to which their services to the country could entitle them, Mr. Canning rose, amidst loud cheers, which lasted for some minutes, and spoke nearly as follows:—*

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, whom you have associated in the toast now drank, allow me to thank this company for the manner in which it has been received. We neither can deserve any support, nor do we claim any, but on the condition coupled by the worthy Chairman, with the expression of his and your kind disposition towards us, that to the best of our ability, we consult and promote the general welfare and happiness of the people. Gentlemen, there is no body of men in the country, from whom such a

* This was the last speech pronounced on any public occasion (out of Parliament) by Mr. Canning. It is now published, for the first time, in a corrected form.

compliment as that you have now bestowed, could come to us with greater welcome.

I believe there is no example in the history of the world, on the one hand, of the existence of an imperial corporation, such as your Chairman represents, or on the other of the concurrence of two co-ordinate authorities, for so long a series of years in conducting without shock or conflict, the administration of the wonderful, I had almost said the tremendous, empire, over which the East-India Company and the Crown jointly preside.

Gentlemen, the construction and maintenance of that vast empire are, indeed, as fearful as extraordinary. It is a disproof of the common adage, that little wisdom is required for governing mankind, to consider how such a machine has been gradually formed—how a varied population of nearly 100,000,000 of souls is kept together under a government so anomalous—and distant thousands of miles—with so much comparative happiness, and so little of internal confusion. But, gentlemen, thegreatness of the concern to be administered has had its natural effect: it has produced a race of men adequate to its administration. I venture to say, that there cannot be found in Europe any monarchy, which within a given time has produced so many men of the first talents, in civil and military life, as India has within the same period, first reared for her own use, and then given to their native country.

Gentlemen, if the compliment paid by you to His Majesty's Ministers be pleasing from the East India Company, it is doubly so on an occasion like the present, when that Company, with the concurrence, and full approbation of His Majesty's Government, is sending back to India a man whom you have brought home for a time, that he might rest in the career of his honourable labours, and whom you now restore to an enlarged sphere of activity, alike for

the advantage of your service and the completion of his own reputation. It is perfectly true, as the gallant officer has himself stated, that, seven or eight years ago,—being then connected with the department of the Government whose duty it is to watch over your affairs,—I recommended Sir John Malcolm to your notice, I believe, for the very post to which he is now destined. I recommended him as one of three individuals then in your service, whose respective merits, all eminent in an extraordinary degree, were so equally balanced, that it became a task of difficulty to choose between them—I speak of Mr. Elphinstone, Sir Thomas Munro, and the gallant officer whose appointment we are now met to celebrate. The selection then made was one rather of circumstances than of preference. Sir John Malcolm, I well remember, acquiesced, with a generous promptitude, in the advancement of his competitors, so worthy of him; and if he has in consequence been for a while thrown behind them in opportunity of serving you, and still further distinguishing himself, I have no doubt that he will speedily overtake them both in deeds and in renown.

THE END.

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